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LIGHTS AND SHADOWS
OF
EUROPEAN HISTORY.



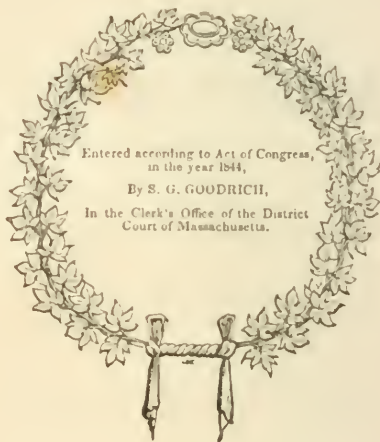
BOSTON:
J. E. HICKMAN, 12 SCHOOL STREET.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS
OF
EUROPEAN HISTORY:

BY THE AUTHOR OF
PETER PARLEY'S TALES.



BOSTON:
J. E. HICKMAN.
12 School Street.



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P R E F A C E .

THE following pages will be found to contain, in the first place, a rapid outline of the History of Europe, from its beginning to the present time ; and then a series of sketches or pictures of important and interesting events, belonging to the history, and drawn out with some detail. It is supposed that even the youthful reader may be able to assign these sketches to their proper chronological places, and that they may, therefore, form a succession of prominent points, from which he may be able to mark the outlines or boundaries of the entire field of European history.

It is believed that there are difficulties in the study of history, which are somewhat formidable to the youthful mind. If the beginner takes an abridgement, which presents the topics in distinct chronological succession, the book is dry, conveys few ideas, and makes a feeble impression on the understanding and memory. If, on the contrary, he enters upon voluminous details, the mind is apt to become confounded in a wilderness of events, and therefore to obtain no clear comprehension of the whole subject.

The present volume is only intended as a partial remedy of the evils attending both these modes of teaching history. By impressing the mind vividly with a few prominent subjects, several important things may be accomplished ; the interest of the reader may be enlisted ; a certain amount of useful information may be stored in the memory ; and a number of positions may be established, which will operate like guide-boards, ever after, to direct the inquirer through the labyrinths in which an extended narrative is sure to inclose him.



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LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

OF

EUROPEAN HISTORY.



GENERAL VIEW.

THIS portion of the Old World occupies the north-western corner of the Eastern Continent, of which it forms a little more than one eighth part. Its extent is 3,900,000 square miles, being about twice that of the United States. Its present population is estimated at 230 millions, or about one fourth part of the population of the globe. Its name is derived from Europa, daughter of an ancient king of Tyre.

Though the last portion of the Continent to be settled, Europe is the first in respect to the intelligence, skill, wealth, and power of its inhabitants. It has, in fact, long been the seat and centre of civilization, from which light and knowledge have radiated over the world. At no period of human history, has any country displayed such progress in the arts, such advances in science, such diffusion of knowledge, as are now witnessed among the leading nations of Europe. Neither Greece nor Rome, in their highest pitch of glory, rivalled, in any considerable degree, the spectacle of political, military, religious, and social exaltation presented by a single European power—that of Great Britain—at the present day.

It is generally admitted, that Asia was the cradle of the human family, and that Europe, as well as Africa, received its first inhabitants from that quarter. But the history of the first settlements in Europe must ever remain shrouded in obscurity. About 2000 years before Christ, certain bands of emigrants from the Asiatic borders of the Mediterranean Sea began to visit Greece, which they found already occupied by various tribes of savages. These were called Pelasgians, and lived in caves, fed upon roots and wild fruit, and clothed themselves in the skins of wild beasts.

About 752, B. C., we are told that Romulus founded Rome, in the centre of Italy; but already the country around was occupied by various tribes, and one of these, the Etruscans, who possessed the territory now called Tuscany, had made considerable progress in civilization. About five centuries previous to the Christian era, the Carthaginians had colonies in Spain,

and were accustomed to visit Britain and Ireland, all of which countries were peopled at that early period.

In the days of Julius Cæsar, fifty years before Christ, not only the portions of Europe which lay along the Mediterranean Sea, but the central and northern sections, were thickly inhabited. Gaul was in the possession of a great and powerful nation, consisting of Celts, who presented a most formidable opposition to the great Roman leader. For nine campaigns they resisted his legions, and it was not till more than a million of men had fallen, that they yielded to the conqueror. At this period, it appears that the whole of Europe was peopled, and many portions of it seem to have been swarming with population.

From this hasty view, we are able to trace the general current of events, in relation to the first settlement of Europe. It would appear, that, at least two thousand years before Christ, portions of emigrants began to set off from the thickly settled coasts of Asia Minor and Africa, to seek their fortunes in the yet unexplored regions which lay along the northern border of the Mediterranean Sea. These parties went by water, and, at first, in small boats or vessels, and consisted, doubtless, of the restless, dissatisfied, and daring portion of the community. In all its essential features, it is probable that the emigration of this period resembled that of our own time, — in which the hardy and resolute adventurers plunge into the wilderness to contend with difficulties and conquer a subsistence from the savage inhabitants and equally inhospitable nature, in a new country. As these parties started from different points, and consisted of different

races, they laid the foundation of so many different tribes, which, as they extended and began to approach each other, fell into frequent acts of hostility ; for it seems that man, in the early stages of society, is the most pugnacious of animals.

Thus it would appear that the southern maritime parts of Europe were settled by emigration from the civilized portions of Asia and Africa, lying at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean Sea ; that these emigrants went chiefly by water, and carried with them the arts known to the countries from which they sprang ; and that this movement had begun at least so early as 1850 years before Christ.

But, while this process was going on, another stream of emigration was setting in from Asia upon Europe, farther to the north. This consisted of various tribes, who either passed between the Caspian and Black seas, and crossed the Don, or, taking a more northerly route, crossed the Volga. The general direction of this movement was to the northwest. The countries from which these people came were probably Tartary, Persia, and the regions around the Caucasian mountains.

The southern nations of Europe, such as the Greeks and Romans, settled down in cities and cultivated the arts ; they had a knowledge of letters, and had thus the means of recording events. Of these we have, therefore, some accounts, and are able to trace the main current of history far back, till it blends in the distance with the mists of fable. With the northern nations it is otherwise. These were entirely in a savage or barbarous state ; for centuries they had no permanent

abodes. They flowed onward like an inundation wave following wave, but leaving no record behind. After the lapse of centuries, we find the whole country occupied, even to the remotest limit of Britain; we see that the great valley of the North is insufficient for the flood of population, and that it even bursts over the Alps, and flows over, like lava, upon the plains of northern Italy. From these facts we can deduce inferences, and, in the absence of precise records, the imagination can aid us to fill up the mighty picture. We can see that for ages there was a constant outpouring of nations from Asia upon Europe; we can see that there were restless, roving tribes, half herdsmen and half robbers; living partly by plunder and partly by the pasturage of cattle, till at last, one by one, they fixed upon some favored spot, and became a settled people. So much we know; and, though we cannot give name and place to particular events, it requires no stretch of fancy to conclude that this is the history of the first settlement of middle and northern Europe. When Cæsar, about fifty years before Christ, crossed the Alps, and began his campaigns in Gaul, he kept a record of what he saw. From that period, we have a continuous history of leading events; but for the 2000 years preceding, during which these portions of Europe were becoming settled, we have hardly any other guide than inference or conjecture.

The emigration into middle and northern Europe appears to have continued for a series of ages, and it is probable that, in some instances, whole nations, amounting to many thousands, broke from their foundations, and moved in one overwhelming torrent

to the north and west, in search of a new abode. Among these emigrant people, the Celts appear to have been one of the most ancient and numerous. At the earliest periods of history, they already occupied a great part of central and western Europe. Prior to the Christian era, these people, under the name of Gauls, had possessed northern Italy, and in the year 382, B. C., a host of them burst over the Alps, and, directing their way to Rome, laid that city in ashes. About 280, B. C., a vast multitude of these people invaded Macedonia and Greece, where they obtained immense booty.

It would appear that the power of the Gauls in Europe was on the decline, even before the time of Cæsar's conquest. They were pressed by enemies on all sides, and, though still numerous and formidable, had evidently lost that ascendancy which they had maintained for many centuries before. At this period, they occupied the northern part of Italy, Spain, France, Britain, and Ireland; and the present inhabitants of these several countries have a large mixture of Celtic blood in their veins. Their language is still preserved with considerable purity among the Irish, who are, in fact, a Celtic nation. Ireland had the singular fortune never to be conquered by Rome, nor, indeed, by any of the tribes that overran the northern portions of Europe. The Irish, therefore, are the oldest nation in Europe, and present to us not only the language of their Celtic ancestors, but, perhaps, an example of their physical and moral characteristics.

The Celts, or Gauls, as described by Cæsar, were men of large size, fair complexion, reddish hair, and

fierce aspect. They could bear cold and rain, but neither heat nor thirst; they were vain and boastful, clamorous, and impatient of control, and quarrelsome among themselves. Their first onset was formidable, but, if once repulsed, they easily gave way and dispersed. Their swords were long and unwieldy, and, being made of copper, bent before the steel armor of the Romans. They fought naked down to the loins; their shields were large and oblong, but slight, and ill-contrived for protection.



Druids.

Their government was aristocratic. The nobles formed the senate, or supreme council. The common people appear to have had no political rights, and were in a state of vassalage. The Druids were the priests, and formed a powerful hierarchy. They were inter-

preters of the law, and judges in civil and criminal matters. Their sacerdotal character was hereditary, though young men of noble families were occasionally adopted into the order.

The religion of the Celts was a kind of Theism ; they had no idols, and always showed great aversion to them. They worshipped the Supreme Being in sacred groves. The oak and the mistletoe were sacred. They had bards, who were not only poets, but sooth-sayers, and their songs were transmitted by tradition. The Druids offered human sacrifices, and they drew omens from certain appearances, and also from the flight of birds.

The Germanic family, though divided into several branches, formed one of the mighty waves of population which poured forth upon Europe from the western portions of Asia. These spread themselves to the north, and occupied Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and a part of Russia and Poland. In the latter regions, they met with Tartars from Asiatic Scythia, and the mixture of these races produced the Slavonic nations.

The decline of the Roman power, in the fourth and fifth centuries, tempted these northern tribes from their cold and less fertile regions, and they rushed down like an avalanche, overspreading the countries which lay before them. The Danes and Saxons seized upon England, and various other tribes obtained a footing in France, Spain, and Italy. The present language of Germany, England, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden has a basis derived from the great Germanic stock. The language of France, Spain, and Italy has a basis derived from the Latin tongue.

Robust forms, light hair, blue eyes, florid complexions, and large, broad-fronted heads constitute the chief physical characteristics of the pure Germanic family; while, morally and intellectually, they stand preëminent above all the other tribes of mankind. They are conspicuous, in particular, for what may be called the *industrial virtues*, exhibiting a degree of indomitable perseverance in all improving pursuits, which has rendered them the great inventors of the human race. The mixture of German and Tartar blood in the northeastern nations of Europe has given to these darker hair and complexions than the pure Germans, and has also lessened their propensity to intellectual cultivation. The effects of the Tartar conquest of Russia, in the twelfth century, by Genghis Khan, whose successors held the country for 200 years, will probably be observable in the career of this people for ages to come, and, indeed, perhaps as long as the race exists.

The history of Europe may be divided into three periods, *Ancient History*, the *Middle Ages*, and *Modern History*. The first of these periods begins with the settlement of Inachus in Greece, in the year 1856, B. C., and ends with the fall of Rome in the year 479, A. D. During this period, none of the present kingdoms of Europe were founded, and the whole space is occupied with the history of Greece and Rome, embracing, however, many countries which formed dependencies of the latter.

The Middle or Dark Ages, extending from the fall of Rome to the year 1400, comprise a long and remarkable period in the history of the human race, and

exhibit many wonderful phenomena of human nature. It was during this period that most of the present kingdoms of Europe had their foundation; it was during this period that the feudal system took its rise, that the crusades had their wild career, that the Troubadours sang their lays of love and war, and that the fantastic institution of chivalry, with most of the orders of knighthood, had their beginning and end. It was during this period, also, for the most part, that Christianity was disseminated throughout Europe, that the present languages of Europe were formed, and that a commingling of races took place, which seemed indispensable to a high and permanent civilization. We may refer to this period, also, for the germs of many of the arts and institutions which contribute to the present improved condition of mankind.

One of the most remarkable circumstances in the history of the Middle Ages is, that, during so dark a period, Gothic architecture took its rise and reached its highest perfection. It is said to affect an imitation of the forest, whose branches unite and form an arch above; but where it originated, or from what source it was derived, is unknown. The subject has afforded much scope for antiquarian speculation, but it is probable that no satisfactory answer to the question will ever be rendered. The knowledge of the art was never permitted to go beyond a fraternity of free-masons, and it is not to be supposed that the early archives of that mysterious association have survived so many revolutions.

The history of the Middle Ages is occupied chiefly with the doings of kings, princes, and potentates. We

hear little of the common people, but their slaughter in war. They were, indeed, regarded but as ingenious animals, made to serve the privileged classes,—to live, suffer, or perish, as might serve the interest, pleasure, or caprice of their masters. As they had no political rights, so they had few domestic comforts. They had, in their mud dwellings, no chairs, or chimneys. A heap of straw served for a bed, and a billet of wood was the only pillow. The houses of the rich, at this period, afforded, indeed, a striking contrast to those of the present day. Few of them contained more than two beds. The walls, which were of stone, were generally bare, without wainscot, or even plaster. In a few instances they were decorated with hangings.

In the twelfth century, a large proportion of England was stagnating with bog, or darkened by native forests, where the wild ox, the roe, the stag, and the wolf had hardly learned the supremacy of man. The culture of land was so imperfect, that nine or ten bushels of corn to the acre was an average crop. The average annual rent of an acre of land was from sixpence to a shilling. In the reign of Edward the First, 1272, a quarter of wheat was sold for four shillings sterling. The price of a sheep was a shilling, that of an ox, ten shillings. It appears, that, in 1301, a set of carpenter's tools was sold for one shilling.

At this period, the living of even the highest nobility of England afforded a striking contrast to that of their luxurious descendants. They drank little wine, which was then sold only by the apothecaries. They rarely kept male servants, except for husbandry, and still more rarely travelled beyond their native country.

An income of ten or twenty pounds was reckoned a competent estate for a gentleman ; at least, the lord of a single manor seldom enjoyed more. A knight who possessed £150 a year passed for extremely rich. Sir John Fortescue speaks of five pounds a year as "a fair living for a yeoman"; and we read that the same sum served for the annual expenses of a scholar attending the university. Modern lawyers must be surprised at the following, which Mr. Hallam extracts from the church warden's accounts of St. Margaret, Westminster, for 1476 ; "Also, paid to Roger Fylpott, learned in the law, for his counsel giving 3s. 8d., *with four pence for his dinner.*"

In an inventory of the goods of "John Port, late the king's servant," who died about 1521, we find that this gentleman's house had consisted of a hall, parlour, buttery, and kitchen, with five bedsteads, two chambers, three garrets, and some minor accommodations. From this it may be inferred that Mr. Port was rather an important man in his day, for very few individuals at that time could boast of such accommodations. His plate was valued at £94, his jewels at £23. It appears that this individual was esteemed a man of great wealth, for his time.

We may consider the Middle Ages as extending to the beginning of the fifteenth century. From this period we can trace a series of remarkable events, all tending to aid in that sunrise of civilization which followed the Dark Ages. The use of gunpowder in projecting heavy bodies is said to have been discovered by Berthold Schwartz, a monk of Mayence, about the year 1300. It was not much used for military purposes till

1350; and, indeed, it was not generally adopted till near a century after. Its ultimate effect has been to modify the art of war; to render it more dependent on science and intellectual combinations, and less a conflict of animal strength and courage. It has sunk the mere hero of muscle into insignificance, and given ascendancy to the leader who combined intellect with skill. It has, at the same time, served to render wars less bloody, and has given opportunity to soften, with certain amenities, even the field of battle.

The invention of printing, about the year 1444, by Guttenberg, also of Mayence, was the crowning art of modern times. Prior to this, all books were written with a pen. A copy of the Bible required four years of labor even for an expert writer, and its value was equal to that of a house and farm. Few, indeed, could possess such a treasure. At the present time, a single day's labor of a common workman will purchase two copies of this sacred volume. In the production of books, Guttenberg's invention has increased the power of man, probably, five thousand fold. It now serves not only to record every passing event, every useful invention, every discovery in art and science, but it has also written down, and multiplied in a thousand forms, all that is left of the past history of mankind. Thus all human knowledge is placed upon record, scattered over the four quarters of the globe, and rendered indestructible by any event less extensive than the devastation of the entire surface of the earth. Nor is even this all; knowledge with its illuminating power is diffused among all classes of men; it is everywhere shedding light upon the darkened minds of the mass;

it is bursting open the doors of prisons, sundering the fetters of tyranny, spreading about the equalizing power of Christianity, and teaching even kings and princes to look upon their subjects as their fellow-men, with rights as sacred as their own, in the eye of reason and of God.

The revival of letters had commenced in the thirteenth century. Dante was born in 1265, Petrarch in 1304, and Boccaccio in 1313. These shining lights were but forerunners of others that soon followed. The discovery or revival of Justinian's Code of Roman Law, in the twelfth century, served to modify the barbarism of the Middle Ages, and to make preparation for the dawn of a brighter era. The invention of the mariner's compass, though the date of it is lost in obscurity, was applied to maritime purposes about the year 1403; and the enlargement of navigation, and the discovery of America in 1492, were the important consequences.

During the Middle Ages, the Romish Church had acquired and exercised a powerful ascendancy over the minds of all classes of men, simple and sage, the plebeian and the prince. However our notions of religious liberty may be shocked at the dominion thus exerted, we cannot deny that we owe much to the monks of this period. Whatever of Christian piety existed was excited and cherished by them; copies of the sacred Scriptures were chiefly preserved and multiplied in the monasteries; and the remains of classical literature have been handed down to us through the same channel.

But the period at last arrived, when the temporal power of the Pope was to receive a decisive check,

and the Church over which he presided was to undergo a fiery trial. Luther, a Saxon monk, began his attack in 1517, and thus commenced that mighty movement which is known in history as the Reformation. The result of this was, to strip the see of Rome of its claims to dominion in secular matters, and to diffuse among the people at large the consciousness of a right, before denied, to exercise their private judgment in religious concerns.

From this period we can see a rapid advance in the march of civilization, and even amidst the violent agitations of society. In 1648, Charles the First of England was brought to the block for the exercise of power which had been more harshly employed, without opposition, by his predecessors. In 1789, the French Revolution commenced, and a heavy reckoning was rendered for bygone years of tyranny, profligacy, and crime. Bonaparte rose like a being of enchantment from the seething caldron of blood, and strode over the earth as a personification of Destiny, conquering and to conquer. Europe in arms hurled him from his pinnacle of power, and the Bourbons sat once more on the throne of France. But, while they had slept, the world had gone on, and society had advanced beyond the possibility of enduring their selfish sway. Another earthquake was necessary to shake down the last lingering remains of an odious dynasty; another revolution, therefore, broke out in 1830, which ended in sweeping away the relics of the former system, and founding a monarchy upon the basis of a written constitution.

The characteristic of modern times in Europe is *agitation*, old dynasties have passed away and new

ones have arisen ; old institutions have ceased, and others have been formed in their place. And even where governments and institutions exist with the same external form as in earlier days, there is generally a change in their spirit and influence. Everywhere there is a recognition of the power of the people, and more or less respect to their rights. There can be no better evidence of this, than the steps taken by Prussia, France, Holland, Belgium, &c., to bestow education upon the mass, by means of which they hope to mould them to obedience. They dare no longer to count upon the ignorance and blindness of the people ; they therefore seek to throw over them the web of loyalty, by means of discipline and association. Prisons are not now the instruments by which kings expect to sustain their thrones. Even the emperor of Austria, or the czar of Russia, would lose rather than gain power by building a Bastile. A system of general education would better accord with the policy of the age.

While, therefore, the aspect of society appears to be marked with fluctuation, like the surface of the sea, we can perceive a general onward tide of improvement. While the political and religious liberties of the people are becoming better understood and more generally acknowledged, the arts which contribute to their happiness are being more extensively diffused. The mass are better able to obtain a living than formerly, and their standard of comfort is daily becoming higher.

Another remarkable characteristic of modern times is the application of science to the arts. Science is no longer a being of the closet,—holding itself aloof in mysterious abstraction from mankind ; but it conde-

scends to mingle in the common affairs of life ; it is found in the smithy and at the forge ; it is in the factory, the foundery, and the machine shop ; it is upon the farm, and in the kitchen ; it is in the toiling steamer on the ocean, and the whizzing car upon the railroad track ; it is in the city, lighting it with gas, — in the mine a hundred fathoms deep, protecting its laborers from the fatal fire-damp ; it is in the wick of the Argand lamp, in the stearin candle, and the friction match. Everywhere the discoveries of science are made applicable to the arts of life, and in a thousand forms they are contributing to make existence more comfortable and more desirable to the mass of mankind.





View of Athens.

ANCIENT GREECE.

GREECE is situated on the northern shore of the Mediterranean, between the Ionian and the Ægean seas. It is a beautiful country of hills and valleys, like Wales, or the Highlands of Scotland. Some of the hills are so high as to be constantly covered with snow. The vales enjoy a mild climate, and are of extreme

fertility. Some of them, as Tempe and Arcadia, are spoken of with rapture by the poets of ancient times.

As the country was much divided by hills and seas, it was separated, from an early period, into several states, which were under different governments, and often made war upon each other. The southern peninsula, anciently styled the Peloponnesus, and now the Morea, was divided into Laconia, — containing the celebrated city of Sparta, — Argolis, Arcadia, Elis, and Messenia, each of which was only about the size of a moderate English county. Middle Greece, now Livadia, to the north of the Peloponnesus, and connected with it by the Isthmus of Corinth, on which lay the city of that name, contained Attica, in which was the city of Athens, Megaris, Bœotia, in which was the city of Thebes, Phocis, Locris, Doris, Ætolia, and Acarnania. Northern Greece contained Thessaly, now the district of Jannina; Epirus, now Albania; and Macedonia, now Filiba Vilajeti; the last of which became distinctly incorporated with Greece, only in the era of Philip and Alexander, between three and four hundred years before Christ.

To the east of Greece Proper lay the numerous islands of the Ægean Sea, with which may be included certain islands lying in the Mediterranean Sea in the same direction, the principal of which were Rhodes, Cyprus, and the Cyclades. To the south lay Cythera, now Cerigo, and Crete, now Candia. To the west, in the Ionian Sea, lay Corcyra, now Corfu; Cephalonia, Ithaca, and others, now constituting the distinct confederacy of the Ionian Islands, under the protection of Great Britain.

PASSAGES IN GRECIAN HISTORY.

GRECIAN history commences about eighteen hundred years before Christ. The thousand years preceding 875, B. C., when Lycurgus gave laws to Sparta, are considered as not strictly historical, inasmuch as the events which distinguish them have been commemorated chiefly by tradition and poetry. Yet, however mingled with fable, the history of this long period is not unworthy of notice, seeing that the Greeks themselves believed in it, and made its incidents and heroes the theme of perpetual allusion in their poetry, and even a part of their religion.

According to the Greek poets, the original inhabitants of the country, denominated Pelasgians, as we have already stated, were a race of savages, who lived in caves, and clothed themselves with the skins of wild beasts. Uranus, an Egyptian prince, landed in the country, and became the father of a family of giants, named Titans, who rebelled against and dethroned him. His son, Saturn, who reigned in his stead, in order to prevent the like fortune from befalling himself, ordered all his own children to be put to death as soon as they were born. But one, named

Jupiter, was concealed by the mother, and reared in the island of Crete, from which, in time, he returned, and deposed his father. The Titans, jealous of this new prince, rebelled against him, but were vanquished and expelled from Greece.

Jupiter divided his dominions with his brothers, Neptune and Pluto. The countries which he reserved to himself he governed with great wisdom, holding his court on Mount Olympus, a hill in Thessaly, seven thousand feet in height, and the loftiest in Greece. Any truth which there might be in the story of the Titans and their princes was completely disguised by the poets and by the popular imagination. Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto were looked back to, not as mortals, but as deities; and the top of Mount Olympus was supposed to be the heavenly residence of the gods by whom the affairs of mortals were governed. For ages after the dawn of philosophy, these deified sons of Saturn, and numberless others connected with them, were the objects of the national worship, not only among the Greeks, but also among the Romans.

At an uncertain, but very early date, an Asiatic people, named the Hellenes, migrated into Greece, in some cases expelling the Pelasgi, and in others intermingling with them, so that, in process of time, all the inhabitants of Greece came to be called Hellenes. They were, however, divided into several races, the principal of which were named Dorians, Æolians, and Ionians, and each of these spoke a dialect differing in some respects from those made use of by the others. These dialects were named the Doric, Æolic, and

Ionic, in reference to the tribes which used them ; and a fourth, which was afterwards formed from the Ionic, was named the Attic, from its being spoken by the inhabitants of Attica.



Inachus laying the Foundation of Argos.

In the year 1856, B. C., Inachus, a Phœnician adventurer, is said to have arrived in Greece, at the head of a small band of his countrymen. Phœnicia, a small state on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, was at this time one of the few countries, including Egypt and Assyria, in which some degree of civilization prevailed, while all the rest of the people of the earth remained in their original barbarism, like the Pelasgians before the supposed arrival of Uranus. Navigation for the purposes of commerce, and the art

of writing, are said to have originated with the Phœnicians. On their arrival in Greece, Inachus and his friends founded the city of Argos, at the head of what is now called the Gulf of Napoli, in the Peloponnesus.

Three hundred years after this event, 1556, B. C., a colony, led by an Egyptian, named Cecrops, arrived in Attica, and founded the celebrated city of Athens, fortifying a high rock which rose precipitously above the site afterwards occupied by the town. Egypt is situated in the northeastern part of Africa. It is bounded on the north by the Mediterranean Sea, and is watered by the great river Nile, the periodical overflows of which, by supplying the moisture necessary for vegetation, render the soil very fertile. From this country, which had, at a very early period, made considerable advances in some of the arts and sciences, Cecrops introduced much valuable knowledge to the rude inhabitants of Attica, whom he had persuaded or obliged to acknowledge him as their chief or king. He placed his rocky fastness under the protection of an Egyptian goddess, from whose Greek name, Athena, afterwards changed by the Latins into Minerva, the city which subsequently arose around the rock was called Athens.

About the year 1493, B. C., Cadmus, a Phœnician, founded the city of Thebes in Bœotia; and, among other useful things which he communicated to the Greeks, he is said to have taught them alphabetical writing, although it is certain that that art did not come into common use in Greece until many centuries after this period.

The city of Corinth, situated on the narrow isthmus

which connects the Peloponnesus with the main land of Greece, was founded in the year 1520, B. C., and from its very advantageous position on the arm of the sea to which it anciently gave a name, but which is now known under the appellation of the Gulf of Lepanto, it very soon became a place of considerable commercial importance. Sparta or Lacedæmon, the celebrated capital of Laconia in the Peloponnesus, is said to have been founded, about 1520, B. C., by Lelex, an Egyptian.

In the year 1485, B. C., an Egyptian, named Danaus, accompanied by a party of his countrymen, arrived at Argos, the inhabitants of which must have been, at that period, in an exceedingly rude state, since it is said that he excited their gratitude so much by teaching them to dig wells, when the streams from which they were supplied with water were dried up with the heat, that they elected him as their king.

More than a century after this period, about 1350, B. C., Pelops, the son of a king of Phrygia, a country in Asia Minor, settled in that part of Greece which was afterwards called, from him, Peloponnesus, or the island of Pelops, where he married the daughter of one of the native princes, whom he afterwards succeeded on the throne. In the course of his long reign, he found means to strengthen and greatly extend his influence in Greece, by forming matrimonial alliances between various branches of his own house and the other royal families of the Peloponnesus. Agamemnon, king of Mycenæ, in Argolis, who was, according to the poet Homer, the commander-in-chief of the Greeks at the siege of Troy, and Menelaus, king of

Sparta, on account of whose wrongs that war was undertaken, were descended from this Phrygian adventurer.

Hercules, a Theban prince, was another of the descendants of Pelops. The numerous and extraordinary feats of strength and valor of Hercules excited the admiration of his contemporaries, and, being afterwards exaggerated and embellished by the poets, caused him at length to be regarded as a person endowed with supernatural powers, and even to be worshipped as a god.



Young Hercules.

According to the poets, Hercules was the son of the god Jupiter, and of Alcmena, daughter of Electryon, king of Mycenæ. Before his birth, his mother mar-

ried Amphytryon, king of Thebes, by whom the infant Hercules was adopted as his son. While yet a child in the cradle, he is fabled to have crushed to death two snakes which the goddess Juno had sent to destroy him. After he grew up, he performed many heroic and extraordinary actions, commonly called his "labors." Among these was the destroying a dreadful lion, by clasping his arms round its neck and thus choking it to death.

Another of the fabled labors of Hercules was his destroying the hydra of Lerna. This was a monstrous seven-headed serpent, which haunted the small lake of Lerna, now Molini, in Argolis, and filled with terror the inhabitants of the whole of that part of the country. Hercules dauntlessly attacked it, and struck off several of its heads with his club. But these wonderful heads were no sooner beaten off than others grew out, so that it seemed an impossibility to kill a monster whose injuries were so quickly repaired. At last, one of the companions of Hercules having, at the hero's request, seared with a hot iron the necks of the hydra as fast as each decapitation was accomplished, it was found that the heads did not afterwards grow out again, and Hercules was thus enabled to complete the destruction of the reptile.

Another achievement of Hercules, to which allusion is often made by modern writers, was the cleaning of the stables of Augeas, King of Elis, in which three thousand cattle had been kept for thirty years, without any attempt having been made, during all that time, to remove the accumulating filth. This much required purification the hero accomplished by turning into

the stables a river which flowed in the vicinity. Hercules also undertook an expedition for the purpose of carrying off the cattle of Geryon, King of Gades, now Cadiz, in Spain. Geryon is represented as having been a monster with three heads, and a proportionate supply of arms and legs, and to have ruled over the greater part of Spain with the utmost cruelty. He was killed by Hercules, who brought away his valuable flocks in triumph. In this expedition he is said to have formed the Strait of Gibraltar, in order to open a communication between the Mediterranean and Atlantic, by rending asunder Spain and Africa, which had until then been connected together. Two mountains, one on each side of the strait, raised by him in the execution of his task, were called the Pillars of Hercules, and the appellation is not unfrequently made use of even at the present day.

After many adventures in foreign countries, he returned to the Peloponnesus, where he took to wife a lady named Dejanira. For a while they lived happily together, but, at last, believing that Hercules had become less attached to her than formerly, his consort presented him with a tunic steeped in a mixture which she expected to operate as a charm in regaining for her his affections, but which was in reality a deadly poison, artfully placed in her hands by an enemy. As soon as Hercules had put on this fatal garment, he was attacked with the most excruciating pain, and being anxious to put a period as speedily as possible to his agonies, he stretched himself upon a funeral pile, and caused a friend to set it on fire. His spirit is said to have ascended to heaven in a chariot drawn by four

horses, which Jupiter, the king of the gods, transmitted to earth for the purpose, and Juno, the celestial queen, gave him her daughter Hebe as his wife. Dejanira, on learning the unfortunate result of her attempt to recover her husband's love, put an end to her life in despair.

Such are the wild fictions which have been handed down respecting Hercules, who was in reality nothing more than a Greek prince of great valor and bodily strength. Having been expelled from Mycenæ by a rival claimant of the throne of that state, he appears to have spent the greater part of his life in wandering about Greece at the head of a band of military followers, sometimes attacking and destroying the robber chiefs and petty tyrants, who at a rude and unsettled period abounded in all parts of the country, and on other occasions engaging in predatory expeditions himself.

During the lifetime of Hercules, 1263, B. C., Jason, a prince of Thessaly, made a voyage to Colchis, a country on the eastern side of the Euxine or Black Sea. His enterprise was afterwards greatly celebrated under the name of the Argonautic Expedition, from the *Argo*, the vessel in which he sailed. This ship is generally referred to by the ancients as the first that ever ventured on a long voyage. It is uncertain what was the real object of the Argonautic expedition, although it seems probable that, as Colchis was rich in mines of gold and silver, Jason and his companions, among whom were Hercules and several other persons of distinction, were actuated by a desire to rob the country of some of its valuable metals. The poets, however, tell us a different story. Phryxus

and Helle, the son and daughter of Athamas, king of Thebes, being compelled, according to the poetical account, to quit their native country to avoid the cruelty of their step-mother, mounted on the back of a winged ram with a fleece of gold, and were carried by this wonderful animal through the air towards Colchis, where an uncle of theirs, named Æetes, was king. Unfortunately, as they were passing over the strait now called the Dardanelles, which connected the Ægean Sea with the Propontis, or Sea of Marmora, Helle became giddy, and, falling into the water, was drowned. From her, says the fable, the strait was in future named the Hellespont, or Sea of Helle.



Phryxus sacrificing the winged Ram.

When Phryxus arrived in Colchis, he sacrificed his winged ram to Jupiter, in acknowledgment of the divine

protection, and deposited its golden fleece in the same deity's temple. He then married the daughter of Æetes, but was afterwards murdered by that king, who wished to obtain possession of the golden fleece. To avenge Phryxus's death, Jason, who was his relation, undertook the expedition to Colchis, where, after performing several marvellous exploits, he not only obtained the golden fleece, but persuaded Medea, another daughter of King Æetes, to become his wife, and to accompany him back to Greece.



Theseus carrying off Helen.

In the year 1234, B. C., Theseus came to the throne of Athens. He was one of the most renowned characters in the heroic age of Greece, not only on account of his warlike achievements, but from his political wis-

dom. In the latter part of his reign he is said to have accompanied Hercules in one of his expeditions, and carried off the beautiful Helen, daughter of Tyndarus, King of Lacedæmon. She was recovered, however, by her gallant brothers, Castor and Pollux, who ravaged Attica in revenge for the insult offered to their sister.

The Lacedæmonian princess who was stolen away by Theseus afterwards became the occasion of a celebrated war. The fame of her great beauty having spread far and wide, many of the princes of Greece asked her from her father Tyndarus in marriage ; but he, being fearful of incurring the enmity of the rejected suitors, declined showing a preference for any of them. Assembling them all, he bound them by an oath to acquiesce in the selection which Helen herself should make, and to protect her against any attempts which might afterwards be made to carry her off from the husband of her choice. Helen gave the preference to Menelaus, a grandson of Pelops, and this successful suitor, on the death of Tyndarus, was raised to the Spartan throne.

At this period, in the northwestern part of Asia Minor, on the shores of the Hellespont and the Ægean seas, there existed a kingdom, the capital of which was a large, well fortified city, named Troy, or Ilium. Priam, the king of Troy, had a son whose name was Paris ; and this young chief, in the course of a visit to Greece, resided for a time in Sparta at the court of Menelaus, who gave the Asiatic stranger a very friendly reception. Charmed with Helen's beauty, Paris employed the opportunity afforded by a tem-

porary absence of her husband, to gain her affections, and persuaded her to elope with him to Troy. It was not, according to the old poets, to his personal attractions, great as they were, that Paris owed his success on this occasion, but to the aid of the goddess of love, whose favor he had won by assigning to her the palm of beauty, on an occasion when it was contested between her and two other female deities.

When Menelaus returned home, he was naturally wroth at finding his hospitality so ill requited, and, after having in vain endeavoured, both by remonstrances and threats, to induce the Trojans to send him back his queen, he applied to the princes who had formerly been Helen's lovers, and called upon them to aid him, according to their oaths, in recovering her from her seducer. They obeyed the summons; and all Greece being indignant at the insult offered to Menelaus, a general muster of the forces of the various states took place at Aulis, a sea-port town of Bœotia, preparatory to their crossing the Ægean to the Trojan shore. This is supposed to have happened in the year 1194, B. C.

Of the chiefs assembled on this occasion, the most celebrated were, Agamemnon, king of Mycenæ; Menelaus, king of Sparta; Ulysses, king of Ithaca; Nestor, king of Pylos; Achilles, son of the king of Thessaly; Ajax, of Salamis; Diomedes, of Ætolia; and Idomeneus, of Crete. Agamemnon, the brother of the injured Menelaus, was elected commander-in-chief of the confederate Greeks. According to some ancient authors, this general was barbarous enough to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, to induce the gods to

send a favoring gale to the Grecian fleet when it was detained by contrary winds in the port of Aulis; but as the earliest writers respecting the Trojan war make no mention of this unnatural act, it is to be hoped that it never was performed.

The Grecian armament consisted of almost twelve hundred vessels, with from fifty to one hundred and twenty men in each, and the army which warred against Troy is supposed to have amounted altogether to about one hundred thousand men. The Trojans, although reinforced by auxiliary bands from Assyria, Thrace, and Asia Minor, were unable to withstand the Greeks in the open country, and they therefore soon retired within the walls of their city.

In those early times men were unskilled in the art of reducing fortified places, and the Greeks knew of no speedier way of taking Troy than blockading it till the inhabitants should be compelled by famine to surrender. But here a new difficulty arose. No arrangements had been made for supplying the invaders with provisions during a lengthened siege; and after they had plundered and laid waste the surrounding country, they began to be in as great danger of starvation as the besieged. The supplies which arrived from Greece were scanty and irregular, and it became necessary to detach a part of the forces to cultivate the plains of the Chersonesus of Thrace, in order to raise crops for the support of themselves and their brethren in arms.

The Grecian army being thus weakened, the Trojans were encouraged to make frequent sallies, in which they were led generally by the valiant Hector, Priam's eldest and noblest son. Many skirmishes took

place, and innumerable deeds of individual heroism were performed, none of which led to any important result, for the opposing armies were so equally matched, that neither could obtain any decisive advantage over the other. At length, after a siege of no less than ten years, in the course of which some of the most distinguished leaders on both sides were slain, Troy was taken, its inhabitants slaughtered, and its edifices burnt to the ground, 1184, B. C.



The Wooden Horse.

According to the poets, it was by a stratagem that this famous city was at last overcome. They tell us that the Greeks constructed a wooden horse of prodigious size, in the body of which they concealed a number of armed men, and then retired towards the

sea-shore to induce the enemy to believe that the besiegers had given up the enterprise, and were about to return home. Deceived by this manœuvre, the Trojans brought the gigantic horse into the city, and the men who had been concealed within it, stealing out in the night time, unbarred the gates and admitted the Grecian army within the walls. The siege of Troy forms the subject of Homer's sublime poem, the *Iliad*, in which the real events of the siege are intermingled with many fictions and supernatural incidents.

The Greek princes discovered that their triumph over Troy was dearly paid for by their subsequent sufferings, and the disorganization of their kingdoms at home. Ulysses, if we may believe the poets, spent ten years in wandering over seas and lands before arriving in the island of Ithaca. Others of the leaders died, or were shipwrecked on their way home, and several of those who succeeded in reaching their own dominions found their thrones occupied by usurpers, and were compelled to return to their vessels, and seek in distant lands a place of rest and security for their declining years. But the fate of Agamemnon, the renowned general of the Greeks, was the most deplorable of all. On his return to Argos, he was assassinated by his wife, Clytemnestra, who had formed an attachment, during his absence, to another person. Agamemnon's son, Orestes, was driven into exile, but afterwards returned to Argos, and, putting his mother and her accomplices to death, established himself upon the throne.

At Delphi, in Phocis, there was a temple of Apollo, to the priest of which the Greeks were wont to apply

for information regarding future events, in the same manner as the people of comparatively recent times were accustomed to consult astrologers, soothsayers, and other artful impostors, on similar questions. Now, Codrus, king of Athens, had learned that the Peloponnesians had received at Delphi a prophetic response or oracle, to the effect that they should be victorious in the war, if they did not kill the Athenian king. Determined to save his country at the expense of his own life, Codrus disguised himself in a peasant's dress, entered the Peloponnesian camp, and provoked a quarrel with a soldier, by whom he was killed.



Codrus slain.

It is not our purpose to trace the events of Grecian history in detail. We have space only to state that

several of the states rose to a great pitch of power and civilization, and continued for centuries to excel all other nations in arts and arms. Athens took the lead in refinement, and became renowned for her architects, sculptors, painters, orators, poets, and philosophers. The works of these, some of which are preserved, still excite the admiration of mankind. The golden age of Athenian history is that of Pericles, who flourished 445 years B. C. The city of Athens at that period was adorned with a multitude of the most splendid public edifices, and these were ornamented with the finest statues the world has ever seen. The fine arts had now reached their greatest degree of perfection, and Athenian civilization its highest point.

Sparta was famous for the martial character of its people, and for a stern patriotism which sacrificed every thing to the good of the state. Here the fine arts were spurned, literature contemned, and the social affections repressed; affording a complete contrast to the condition of affairs in Athens.

There are two things in Grecian history which cannot fail to excite our admiration; the splendid achievements of the Greeks in war, and the host of great men they produced. About the year 480, B. C., Xerxes, an Asiatic king, assailed the country with an army of several millions. He was met by the fearless Greeks with indomitable valor; his squadrons were cut to pieces, and the baffled monarch was driven back in disgrace to his own dominions. This was but one of the mighty acts of this remarkable people.

Among the great names that glitter along the pages of Grecian history, we may mention Homer, the most

famous of ancient poets ; Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the greatest of ancient philosophers ; Leonidas, Aristides, Alcibiades, Themistocles, and many other dis-



Xerxes surveying his Army.

tinguished generals ; Philip and Alexander, renowned conquerors ; Praxiteles, the most celebrated of sculptors ; Pericles and Demosthenes, illustrious orators.

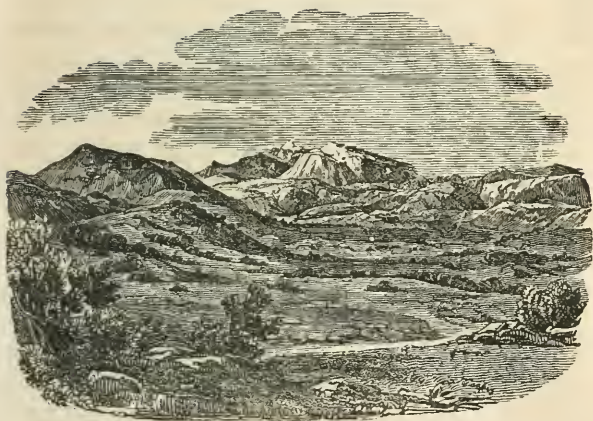
The liberties of Greece received a fatal shock in the assumption of supreme authority by Philip of Macedon, after the bloody battle of Chæronæa, 338, B. C. This passed to his son, Alexander, and, after his death, to his successor. The declining sun of Grecian glory gradually went down, and finally set in the year 146, B. C., when Greece became a Roman province, under the name of Achaia.

But, although Ancient Greece was thus blotted out as an independent country, its glory can never pass away. It has handed down to us many of the finest examples of patriotism and friendship ; the noblest specimens of architecture ; the most perfect models of sculpture ; and specimens of poetry and oratory which are still regarded as master-pieces in these noble arts. The works of the philosophers of Greece have been studied for more than two thousand years as fountains of knowledge ; and Plato and Aristotle are regarded, at the present day, as among the master spirits who continue to rule over the thinking world.

To the Greeks we are chiefly indebted for the invention of that ancient mythology of which Jupiter was the head. This had, no doubt, its foundation in real history ; but upon a slight basis of reality a most fanciful fabric was reared by the poets. The manner in which poetry may pass into history is easily seen by any one who has recently visited the Highlands of Scotland. When the traveller is conducted over Loch Katrine and its borders, the scene of "The Lady of the Lake," he is told by his guide, "There is the place where Fitz James's 'gallant gray' fell,—yonder gravelly spot is the 'silver strand,' where the chieftain first met Ellen,—there is 'Ellen's Isle,' and that gnarled ash is the tree to which she tied her boat. That rugged knoll was Roderick Dhu's castle, and upon the top of it he and Fitz James slept together. There is Ben Venue, and far up, near its top, is the 'Goblin's Cave.' Yonder is Ben Ain, and there is Coilantogle ford, where the two champions closed in deadly encounter."

Such is the account given by the guide, pointing out actual localities, and connecting them with events, which, though the mere invention of the poet, are still spoken of as no less real than the "rocks, mounds, and knolls" which are before the eye. How soon will these guides get to feel that the fictions they repeat are histories, and that Fitz James, Ellen, and Roderick Dhu, were as much realities, as the objects with which the wizard "harp of the north" has associated them! The children of these guides will believe, as real, what their fathers told as fiction; and if we suppose such a process as this to take place in a dark age, when there are no books, we can see how easily the fictions of the poet pass into the received chronicles of the historian.





Mount Olympus.

GRECIAN MYTHOLOGY.

THE religious beliefs and observances of the Greeks, constituting their mythology, are intimately connected with the fabulous and poetical portion of their history. It has already been stated, that Uranus, his son Saturn, and his grandsons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, appear to have been the chiefs of a colony of Egyptians who settled in Greece at an exceedingly remote period, and that after their death their ignorant posterity came in course of time to regard them as gods, and to pay them divine honors accordingly.

According to the poets, who were the principal

framers and expounders of the Grecian mythology, Jupiter, the chief of the gods, and the ruler of heaven and earth, was the son of Saturn, — a god who had been compelled by a powerful and tyrannical brother, named Titan, to promise that he would destroy all his male children. This promise Saturn for some time fulfilled, by devouring his sons as soon as they were born; but at last, Rhea, his wife, contrived to conceal the birth of Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, who thus escaped the fate of their brethren. On discovering that Saturn had male offspring alive, in contravention of his engagement, Titan deposed him from his authority, and cast him into prison. But Jupiter, having grown up to manhood, overcame Titan in turn, and restored Saturn to his throne. These vicissitudes, it is to be observed, and others that befell the early divinities, were the result of the decrees of Fate; a power over which the heathen gods are represented as having no control.

Notwithstanding this filial conduct of Jupiter, he afterwards quarrelled with his father, whom he dethroned and chased into Italy, where Saturn is said to have passed his time in a quiet and useful manner, occupied solely in teaching the rude inhabitants to cultivate and improve the soil. He was afterwards known — under the name of Chronos — as the god of Time, and was usually represented under the figure of an old man, holding in one hand a scythe, and in the other a serpent with its tail in its mouth, in allusion to the destructive influence of time, and the endless succession of the seasons. The rule of Saturn in Italy was productive of so much happiness, that this period was ever afterwards called the Golden Age.

After Saturn had been driven into exile, his three sons divided his dominions amongst them. Jupiter reserved to himself the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, Neptune obtained the empire of the sea, and Pluto received as his share the sceptre of the infernal regions. Jupiter did not, however, enjoy unmolested his supreme dignity; for the offspring of Titan — a race of terrible giants — set the new deity at defiance, and, by piling the mountains named Pelion and Ossa one upon the other, endeavoured to ascend into heaven to pluck him from his throne. The gods, in great alarm, fled from their divine abode on Mount Olympus into Egypt, where they concealed their true character by assuming the forms of various animals; but Jupiter, assisted by Hercules, at last succeeded in destroying the giants, and reasserting his sovereign sway. Jupiter is always represented on a throne, with thunderbolts in his right hand, and an eagle by his side.

Jupiter took in marriage his sister Juno, who is described as a beautiful, but ill-tempered goddess, and is usually depicted as seated in a chariot drawn by two peacocks. Neptune, the brother of Jupiter, and god of the ocean, is painted as a half-naked man, of majestic figure, with a crown on his head, and a trident or three-pronged fork in his hand, drawn in a car over the sea by water-horses. Pluto, the remaining brother of Jupiter, and god of the infernal regions, was painted by the Greeks as seated on a throne with his wife Proserpina by his side, and the three-headed dog Cerberus before him.

Nine of the most important of the deities were con-

sidered as the children of Jupiter. Apollo was the god of music, poetry, painting, and medicine; he is represented as a young man of great elegance of person, with a bow in his hand, and a quiver of arrows on his back. Mars, the god of war, is drawn as an armed man, in a car, with an inferior female deity, named Bellona, by his side. Bacchus was the god of wine, and was usually represented as a young man, with a cup in one hand, and a spear called a *thyrsus* in the other. His name has given rise to many phrases in our language, expressive of circumstances connected with drinking. Mercury was the messenger of Jupiter, and the god of oratory, of merchandise, and of thieving. He was represented as a youth flying along the air, with wings at his cap and heels, and a peculiar wand, called a *caduceus*, in his hand. Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, was painted as a female of severe aspect, with armor on the head and breast, and bearing a spear and shield, while an owl sits by her side. Venus, the goddess of beauty and love, was depicted as a handsome woman, in undress. Diana, the goddess of hunting and of chastity, appeared as a beautiful female, with bow and arrow in her hands, buskins on her limbs, and a crescent on her forehead. Hebe, the goddess of youth, took the form of a blooming young girl, and was said to bear the cup of Jupiter.

Another of the children of Jupiter was Vulcan, who, being of ungainly form, and disagreeable in the eyes of his father, was cruelly thrust by him out of heaven, so that he fell on the Isle of Lemnos, and, breaking a limb, was lame ever after. On earth, Vulcan em-

employed himself as an artificer in iron, and hence he has been assumed as the patron of blacksmiths. Jupiter is said to have employed him in fabricating his thunderbolts. The workshop of Vulcan was believed to be underneath the burning mountain *Ætna*, in Sicily; and the term *Volcano* is derived from that circumstance. The gay goddess *Venus* is represented as married to this homely deity, to whom she occasioned much uneasiness by the levity of her conduct.

Besides the other attributes and avocations of *Apollo*, he was the deity of the sun, having the task confided to him of guiding that luminary in its diurnal course through the heavens. His sister, *Diana*, had a similar charge over the moon. *Apollo*, or *Phœbus*, as he was also named, had a son called *Phaëton*, who, being, like many other young people, self-confident and rash, took advantage of the indulgent disposition of his father to obtain from him the charge of the chariot of the sun for one day. But *Phaëton* had not travelled far on his journey up the heavens, when his fiery steeds became unmanageable, and, running away with the sun, descended so close to the earth, that it was set on fire. Jupiter perceived what had happened, and, fearing that the whole universe would be consumed, struck *Phaëton* dead with a thunderbolt; then, after a great deal of trouble, he extinguished the dangerous conflagration, and set the sun once more on its usual course.

None of the heathen deities is more frequently referred to than *Cupid*, the god of love. He was the son of *Venus*, and bore the aspect of a beautiful boy. He had a pair of wings, and was furnished with a bow

and a quiver of arrows, which he shot into the hearts of those whom he wished to inflame with tender passions, over which he had control. So great was his power, that he could tame the most ferocious animals, and break in pieces the thunderbolts of Jupiter himself.

There was a number of divinities of minor importance. Hymen was the god of marriage, and was represented with a crown of flowers on his head, and a lighted torch in his hand. Æolus was the god of the winds, which he kept confined in caverns, except at such times as he chose to let them loose upon the world. Pan was the god of the country. He was flat-nosed and horned, and had legs, feet, and a tail resembling those of a goat. His favorite haunt was the vales of Arcadia, where he excited the admiration of the shepherds around him by the sweet sounds of his rustic pipe.

Astræa was the goddess of justice, and during the Golden Age, when men were virtuous and happy, she dwelt, like many other deities, on earth ; but, after the world became wicked, she bid it a sorrowful farewell, and, ascending to heaven, was transformed into the sign of the zodiac which is named Virgo, or the Virgin. Themis was the goddess of law, and, after the departure of Astræa, she had also to sustain, as well as she was able, the character of the goddess of justice. We see in this, as in some other than mythological fables, no small degree of meaning.

Inexorable destiny, which governs all things, was personified by three sisters, called the Fates, who represented the Past, the Present, and the Future. They were poetically described as constantly employ-

ed in spinning the thread of human life. One held the distaff, another spun, and the third cut the thread when it had reached its appointed length. To the decrees of these stern sisters even Jupiter himself was obliged to bend, and his thunders, which affrighted all the other divinities, were heard by them undisturbed.

The Furies were also three in number, and to them belonged the task of punishing the guilty both on earth and in hell. Instead of hair, their heads were covered with serpents, and their looks were fierce and terrible. Each of the sister-furies waved a torch in the one hand, while the other wielded a scourge. The latter instruments inflicted remorseless punishment on those who had incurred the anger of the gods. War, famine, and pestilence — the penalty of vice and crime — proceeded from these dread sisters ; and Grief, Terror, and Madness were painted as their inseparable followers.

These avengers of guilt form a striking contrast to another sisterly trio, to whom the ancients gave the name of the Graces. These were named Aglaia, Thalia, and Euphrosyne, and their aspect and attributes corresponded with the common name they bore. They were the daughters of Bacchus and Venus, and were usually represented as unattired, and linked in each other's arms.

The nine Muses were named Thalia, Melpomene, Calliope, Clio, Erato, Euterpe, Polyhymnia, Terpsichore, and Urania. They were the patronesses of literature and the fine arts, and resided on Parnassus, a lofty mountain in the district of Phocis. Thalia presided over comedy ; Melpomene over tragedy ; Erato

over amatory poetry ; Polyhymnia over eloquence and imitation ; Calliope over heroic or epic poetry ; Clio over history ; Euterpe over music ; Terpsichore over dancing ; and Urania over the study of astronomy.

There was a class of demi-gods, who filled imaginary places in every corner both of earth and sea. The shady groves and flowery vales were peopled by Dryads or wood-nymphs, and Satyrs, a species of rural deities, who, like Pan, had the horns, legs, and feet of goats. Mountains and streams possessed their guardian gods and goddesses, and every fountain had its Naiad or water-nymph. The lively imagination of the Greeks made them consider the thunder as the voice of Jupiter ; the soft breezes of summer were to them the movement of the wing of Æolus ; the echo of the forest was the voice of a goddess ; and the gentle murmur of the streamlet sounded as the tones of its presiding deity. In short, whatever sound or sight in nature charmed their fancy, the Greeks ascribed the pleasure to the agency of unseen, but beautiful and immortal, beings.

Physical beauty was, nevertheless, much more prominent than moral, in the divinities shaped out by the imagination of the Greeks. Their gods were represented as mingling in the affairs of mortals, and frequently lending their superior power and intelligence to the promotion of schemes of vice and villainy. They were animated by envy, malice, and all the evil passions to which men are subject, and they did not hesitate to adopt any measures, however base, to gratify their nefarious purposes. Even Jupiter, the

king of heaven, is described as acting a very profligate part on earth.

Yet, strange as it may seem, most of the Greeks appear to have been impressed with sincere religious feelings. The stories of the gods had come down to them with the authority of antiquity, and habit made them bow to beings of whose characters their reason could not approve. It seems, impossible, however, that the sages, philosophers, and other persons of cultivated intellect, who flourished in Greece, could have reposed faith in the tissue of gross and extravagant fables of which this mythology was composed; and, in fact, it is known that Socrates, and others of the wisest men of antiquity, rejected the popular belief, and, observing the unity of design which is apparent in all the works of nature, rightly conjectured that the whole universe must have been created by one omnipotent and omniscient God, the sovereign and ruler of all.

The Greeks believed in a future state of rewards and punishments. They imagined, that, after death, the souls of men descended to the shores of a dismal and pestilential stream, called the Styx, where Charon, a grim-looking personage, acted as ferryman, and rowed the spirits of the dead across the melancholy river, the boundary of the dominions of Pluto. To obtain a passage in Charon's boat, it was necessary that the deceased should have been buried. Those who were drowned at sea, or who were in any other manner deprived of the customary rites of sepulture, were compelled to wander about on the banks of the Styx for a hundred years, before being permitted to cross it.

After quitting the vessel of Charon, the trembling shades advanced to the palace of Pluto, the gate of which was guarded by a monstrous dog, named Cerberus, which had three heads, and a body covered with snakes instead of hair. They then appeared before Minos, Rhadamanthus, and Æacus, the three judges of the infernal regions, by whom the wicked were condemned to torments, and the good rewarded with heavenly pleasures.

Tartarus, the place of punishment, was the abode of darkness and horror. There Tantalus, for a vile crime done in life, remained perpetually surrounded with water, which fled from his lips whenever he attempted to quench his burning thirst, while over his head hung branches laden with delicious fruits, which shrunk from his grasp as often as he stretched out his hand to pluck them.

There, also, was Ixion, bound with serpents to the rim of a wheel, which, constantly revolving, allowed no cessation of his agonies. Another variety of punishment was allotted to Sisyphus, who was condemned to the endless task of rolling a huge stone up the side of a steep mountain, which he had no sooner accomplished than it rolled down again to its former place. On one side criminals were writhing under the merciless lash of the avenging Furies, and on another were to be seen wretches surrounded with unquenchable flames.

Elysium, the abode of the blessed, was a region of surpassing loveliness and pleasure. Groves of the richest verdure, and streams of silvery clearness, were to be met with on every side. The air was pure, serene, and temperate; the birds continually warbled

in the woods ; and a brighter light than that of the sun was diffused throughout that happy land. No cares nor sorrow could disturb its inhabitants, who spent their time in the enjoyment of those pleasures they had loved on earth, or in admiring the wisdom and power of the gods.



Victors at the Olympic Games.

GRECIAN GAMES.

THOUGH we are accustomed to speak of Greece as one country, we have already seen that it consisted of several distinct nations. In the earlier periods of their history, these were hostile to each other, and it was long before they united in one great confederation. The almost incessant wars that took place kept the

people from free communication with each other, and thus hindered their advance in civilization. But, fortunately, a king of Elis, named Iphitus, at length devised an institution, by which the people of all the Grecian states were enabled, notwithstanding their quarrels and wars with one another, to meet periodically on friendly terms, and communicate to each other such information as might be useful for the improvement and welfare of the whole.

This institution was an Olympic festival. From a very remote period, the Greeks had been accustomed to engage in contests of strength and agility during their times of festivity, and also at the funerals of distinguished personages. Iphitus conceived the idea of establishing a periodical festival in his own dominions, for the celebration of these ancient games, and of religious rites in honor of Jupiter and Hercules; and, having obtained the authority of the Delphian oracle for carrying his design into execution, he instituted the festival, and appointed that it should be repeated every fourth year, at Olympia, a town of Elis.

To this festival he invited all the people of Greece; and, that none might be prevented from attending it by the wars in which any of the states might be engaged, the Delphic oracle commanded that a general armistice should take place for some time before and after each celebration. The date of the establishment of the Olympic games, 884, B. C., was afterwards assumed by the Greeks as the epoch from which they reckoned the progress of time; the four years intervening between each occurrence of the festival being styled an *Olympiad*.

Three other institutions of a similar nature were afterwards established; namely, the Isthmian games, celebrated near Corinth; the Pythian, at Delphi; and the Nemean, at Argolis. These took place on the various years which intervened between the successive festivals at Olympia; but, although they acquired considerable celebrity, none of them rose to the importance and splendor of that of Iphitus. The games which were celebrated at the festivals consisted of foot and chariot races, wrestling and boxing matches, and other contests, requiring strength and agility, together with competitions in music and poetry. The victors in the Olympic games were crowned with an olive wreath, an honor which it was esteemed by the Greeks one of the highest objects of ambition to attain.





Romulus and Remus.

ROME.

ABOUT the time when Lycurgus was settling the institutions of Sparta, Italy was possessed by a set of tribes, some of which, from the traces of their language and arts which have been preserved, appear to have been of Eastern origin, being probably colonies from Greece and Asia Minor. The Etrurians, who occupied modern Tuscany, were the most refined of these races. In the country of the Latins, more to the south, in the middle of the eighth century before Christ, a small settlement was formed on a hill near the Tiber, under the conduct, it is said, of a youthful leader named Romulus.

The history of this individual is embellished by the ancients with a variety of ingenious fables. He is represented as the son of Mars and Ilia. When an infant, he and his twin brother, Remus, were thrown into the Tiber by a usurper of the crown, but they were miraculously saved by a she-wolf, which came forth and fed them with her milk. They were at length found by one of the king's shepherds, who reared them as his own children.

When the two brothers had reached manhood, they undertook to build a city, and it was decided by an omen that Romulus should be its ruler. A line drawn by the plough, after the fashion of the Etrurians, became the boundary of the town, which at first was composed of only a few huts, occupied by shepherds, freebooters, and other rude people. From such a beginning rose the mighty city, and finally the empire of Rome, taking their name from Romulus, the founder.

This enterprising leader became king of the little state, and, as such, established certain laws and regulations for the general advantage. The lands, which extended several miles around the city, were divided into three portions, one for the support of government, another for the maintenance of religion, and a third for the people themselves, each person having about two acres. A senate was established, consisting of a hundred (afterwards two hundred) members, who were styled *patres* (fathers), and whose descendants, under the name of patricians, or the equestrian order, formed the nobility of Rome. The senate prepared all measures; but these were ultimately deliberated on by the *plebs*, or bulk of the people, and through the medium of repre-

sentatives, as in modern states, by a general assembly held in the open air. At first, to increase the numbers of the people, all kinds of malefactors, who could get no settled footing elsewhere, were invited to the new city ; it was then found that the male sex preponderated, and the deficiency was supplied by a stratagem, of a nature which marks a very rude state of society.

The Sabines, a neighbouring people, were invited to witness the games at Rome ; and, while these were proceeding, the young men laid hands each on one of the young Sabine women, whom they carried off, and compelled to become their wives. The Sabines were enraged at this act ; but the women themselves, when reconciled to their new situation, interposed to prevent bloodshed, and ultimately the transaction had the effect of uniting the Sabines with the Romans, and thus increasing the power of the infant state.

Such is the history usually given of the origin of Rome. A late German writer, M. Niebuhr, has shown reason for regarding it as in a great measure fabulous. He considers Romulus as a being little better than imaginary, and the laws and regulations bearing his name as having sprung up in the course of time, and all of them after the period when Romulus is represented as having lived.

The Roman people, from the earliest period of their history, bore a marked resemblance, in religion, manners, and general pursuits, to the Greeks, from whom it is obvious that they drew their origin. They believed in the same imaginary deities, such as Jupiter, Neptune, Pluto, Mars, Venus, &c., besides a great number, which, in the course of time, they add-

ed to this monstrous system of mythology. Like the Greeks, also, they dressed themselves in a simple manner, with a loose mantle, or *toga*, over a kind of kilt, which left the legs exposed. At the outset, their dependence was almost entirely on agriculture; but for the cultivation of the peaceful arts generally they seem to have possessed no taste. War and plunder were their favorite pursuits, in which they far exceeded the Greeks, and almost all other nations of ancient or modern times. Their language, founded on the Greek, was that since known as the Latin, a term derived from Latium, the early name of the country in which Rome was situated.

During the early period of its history, the Roman government was monarchical, but restricted by a senate and popular assembly, and therefore favorable to social advancement. From Romulus is reckoned a series of seven kings, the ablest of whom, Servius Tullius, placed Rome at the head of the small states, forming what has been called the Latin confederacy, and considerably improved the municipal institutions of the kingdom. The last of the seven kings of Rome was Tarquinius, surnamed the Proud. His son Sextus having committed an atrocious act of violence on Lucretia, the wife of Collatinus, she, unable to survive the dishonor, killed herself. By this transaction, the disgust of the people with their royal family, and with monarchy in general, was brought to a head; and under a noble Roman, named Brutus, they rose and expelled Tarquinius, with all his family. Thus ended the regal power in Rome, in the year 509, B. C.

The monarchy was succeeded by a republic, in

which the chief legislative authority rested with the senate, and the liberties of the people were very little improved. The executive was committed to two magistrates of equal authority, named consuls, who were chosen annually. Brutus, who had distinguished himself in expelling the royal family, was chosen one of the two first consuls. During the time he held office, his two sons joined in a conspiracy to restore Tarquin; and Brutus, with a disregard of his own affections which was considered a great virtue in Greece and Rome, when the public interest was concerned, condemned them both to be beheaded in his presence.

The early years of the republic were marked by great struggles between the patrician, or noble order, and the common people. The vigor and perseverance with which the latter sought to emancipate themselves from the authority of the former composed a striking picture in ancient history, and conveyed the impression that there were here elements of character superior to what existed at the time in any other nation, except the Greeks. It would be wearisome, however, to detail these various contentions.

From the beginning, the plebeians showed a tendency to acquire the mastery. By the "Valerian law," they acquired the right of giving a final judgment on any person condemned by a magistrate. Their importance in composing armies also helped to give them influence. By seizing an opportunity when the patricians were in difficulties from foreign aggression, 492, B. C., they obtained the right of appointing tribunes, — at first two in number, afterwards five, and

finally ten, — who had the power of suspending the decrees of the senate and the sentences of the consul, and had a general charge over the interests of the common people. The power enjoyed by the plebeians at this time is marked by their causing the celebrated Coriolanus to be sent into banishment, his splendid military services being insufficient to atone for his openly espousing the cause of the patricians, and expressing contempt for the people. By a certain law, they finally obtained the right of assembling in *comitia*, and of discussing public affairs, without the decree of the senate, — a measure equivalent to the assembling of the British parliament without the king's writ, — and thus the government of Rome became highly democratic, 471, B. C.

As yet the Romans had had no written law. The kings, and after them the consuls, had administered justice each according to his own sense. In the year 451, B. C., at the suggestion of a tribune named Terentilius, ten men (*decemviri*) were appointed to frame and digest a code of laws for the explanation and security of the rights of all orders of the state. The result was the formation of what have been called the Twelve Tables of the Roman law, to learn which by heart was a part of liberal education in Ancient Rome.

On the appointment of the Decemviri, the consuls were discontinued. Each of the ten men acted as supreme magistrate for a day, the nine others officiating as judges. They did not, however, remain long in authority. One of the number, named Appius Claudius, having formed a base design against a maiden named Virginia, daughter of Virginius, a centurion,

and affianced to Icilius, caused her to be claimed as his slave, and, as decemvir, gave judgment in his own favor. When Virginius saw his daughter about to be sacrificed to a profligate monster, he seized a knife from a butcher's stall in the Forum, and stabbed her to the heart. The people rose in fury against Appius, who escaped for the time, but at length only avoided punishment by committing suicide. This event caused the abolition of the decemvirate, after it had lasted only three years. The consuls and tribunes were then restored.

The violent struggles of the patricians and plebeians did not prevent Rome from gradually acquiring an ascendancy among the Italian States. The armies of Rome, unlike all others in those early times, were standing armies; the soldiers had regular pay, and made arms a profession. Their compact and well-organized force, meeting in general only ill-disciplined militia, carried every thing before it. Veii, a state which had long defied and rivalled them, fell before Camillus (396, B. C.). In 385, B. C., they finally reduced the Gauls, a powerful branch of the Celtic race inhabiting the north of Italy. They then fought and subdued the Samnites. Other states fell beneath their powerful arms, and in the year 274, B. C., they had acquired the complete mastery of all Italy.

The three wars with Carthage, called the Punic Wars, all terminating in favor of Rome, were the great events of the next hundred and twenty years. It was during the first of them that Regulus, a noble Roman general, was taken by the Carthaginians. He was permitted to go to Rome to propose terms of peace, upon the condition, however, that he should return, if

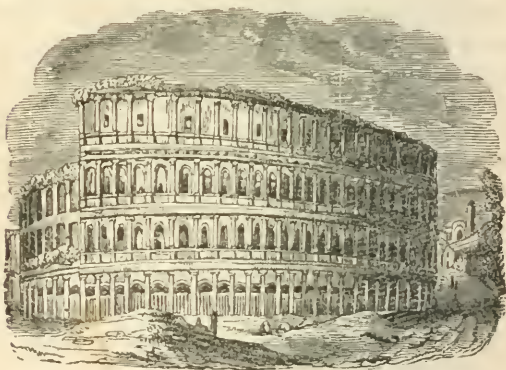
the offer he bore should not be accepted. Regulus went, but earnestly opposed the treaty, as being dishonorable to Rome. It was rejected, and he returned to Carthage in obedience to his promise, and submitted to the cruel death which he knew awaited him. The first Punic War was closed in the year 241, B. C.

After twenty-three years of peace, Carthage had recruited her wasted resources, and Hannibal then commenced his splendid career against Rome. He entered Italy at the north, traversed nearly its whole length, and, having often defeated the Roman legions, he maintained himself in Italy for sixteen years, drawing his whole supplies from the country he had invaded. But even Hannibal was finally defeated, and Carthage was a second time obliged to submit to a degrading peace, 202, B. C. The third Punic War began in 149, B. C., and ended, three years after, in the complete destruction of the city of Carthage.

These and other successes intoxicated the Roman people. Gorged with the spoils of other countries, they became at once luxurious, ambitious, and unscrupulous. They made war for plunder, with as little hesitation as does a professed robber upon the land, or a pirate upon the high seas. As they sent forth large armies, and to a considerable distance, for the purposes of conquest, the leaders acquired great power. By flattering the soldiery they learned to render them obedient to their will, and Cæsar at last led his forces against Rome itself.

It was at this period, when the commonwealth was about to pass into the hands of an absolute monarch, that the Romans had attained the height of their power

Directing their main energies to military conquest, they had enjoyed some centuries of glory, with every kind of plunder which the conquered countries could furnish. Every district in Europe, Asia, and Africa, lying within reach of the Roman legions, had become tributary to Rome. At this period, the nation reckoned about 7,000,000 of citizens, with twice as many provincials, besides as many slaves. From being an obscure town, Rome had become a wide-spread city, and was adorned with majestic temples, public edifices, and palaces. Other towns in Italy also rose into importance, and became the residence of distinguished Roman citizens.



Amphitheatre at Rome.

The public monuments of this remarkable people were placed, not only in the capital, but all over the provinces; and some of them are to this day reckoned among the greatest wonders of art. But the stu-

pendous character of their undertakings was chiefly seen in their roads. All the cities of the empire were connected with each other, and with the capital, by public highways, which, issuing in various directions from the Forum — or great central place of public assembly — of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire. On the northwest, the boundary of this extensive empire was the wall of Antoninus, built betwixt the Friths of Clyde and Forth, in Scotland, and on the southeast it was the ancient city of Jerusalem. If the distance between the two points be carefully traced, it will be found that the great chain of communication was drawn out to the length of 3,740 English miles.

The public roads were accurately divided by mile-stones, and ran in a direct line from one city to another, with very little respect for the obstacles either of nature or private property. Mountains were perforated, and bold arches thrown over the broadest and most rapid streams. The middle part of the road was raised into a terrace, which commanded the adjacent country, consisted of several strata of sand, gravel, and cement, and was paved with large stones, or, in some places near the capital, with granite. Such was the solid construction of the Roman highways, whose firmness has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united the subjects of the most distant provinces by an easy and familiar intercourse; but their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions; nor was any country considered as completely subdued, till it had been rendered,

in all its parts, pervious to the arms of the conqueror. The advantage of receiving the earliest intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to establish regular posts throughout their extensive dominions. Post-houses were everywhere erected at distances of only five or six miles; each of them was constantly provided with forty horses, and, by the help of these relays, it was easy to travel a hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads.

By these means the Romans maintained their ascendancy in every country, and diffused through the whole empire the improvements of social life. There was thus a nobleness and grandeur in various circumstances connected with the Roman sway, which, by a moderate, firm, and enlightened system of government, might have ultimately proved of the greatest importance in the social advancement of mankind. It was most unfortunate, however, both for this sacred cause and for the welfare of the Roman people themselves, that the plan of enriching the commonwealth, at the seat of power, consisted almost exclusively in robbing foreign territories, — a plan which it is impossible should ever permanently exist in any country, whatever be its power. Besides, with all the encouragement given to the fine arts, such as architecture, sculpture, and the production of luxuries, there was no substantial industry or commerce, and no means were taken to enlighten and refine the community, by science, literature, or morals. The whole fabric of Roman greatness, in fact, rested on no sure foundation; and its gradual decline and fall, after the extinction of the republic, cannot excite the smallest degree of surprise.

The successes of Cæsar placed him at the head of the Roman world. His only remaining opponent was Cato, who has been described as one of the most faultless characters in Roman history. This eminent patriot was, however, unable, by force of arms, to restore the liberties of the people, or to arrest Cæsar in his victorious and ambitious career. Being at last deserted by his friends, and dreading to fall into the hands of his enemy, after pondering awhile on the nature of the immortality of the soul, he stabbed himself with his own sword, — an act which Roman morality held as perfectly justifiable, and which was committed by many of the first characters in the state, when they happened to be deserted by fortune. After the death of Cato, Cæsar was without a rival. Returning to Rome in triumph, he established his authority as dictator, and shortly afterwards received the title of Imperator, or Emperor, with full powers of sovereignty.

This usurpation of power united the friends of the republic, and sixty senators entered into a conspiracy against him. Though aware of his danger, Cæsar, being of a bold nature, went to the senate house, where he was assailed by the conspirators. He defended himself with the utmost bravery, until he saw Brutus, whom he esteemed as a friend, among his assailants. The latter came up and struck him in the thigh with a dagger. Cæsar now exclaimed, in bitterness of soul, “And you too, Brutus!” and, no longer attempting resistance, he folded his robe over his face, and fell dead at the base of Pompey’s statue.

Octavius Cæsar, grand nephew and adopted son of

Julius Cæsar, after a bloody struggle obtained the throne. He now assumed the title of Augustus, and, instead of attempting to extend his dominions, he sought rather to consolidate his empire. He flattered the Roman people with a show of republican forms, while he made them apparently happy in the tranquillity of a concealed despotism. He encouraged literature, and during his reign, which is called by way of distinction the Augustan Age, some of the finest productions of Roman genius, such as the works of Virgil and Horace, were given to the world. It was also in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Augustus that Jesus Christ was born in the Roman province of Judea.

Tiberius succeeded Augustus, and Caligula followed. This profligate emperor carried luxury to its height. He contrived baths in which the richest oils and most precious perfumes were used with profusion; he sought out expensive and rare dishes, and had jewels dissolved in his sauces. He built a stable of marble for his horse, with a manger of ivory. This wretch was succeeded by Claudius; and Nero, the greatest monster of antiquity, followed.

A long line of emperors are now presented in succession, most of whom must be ranked among the basest of mankind. In the year 306, A. D., Constantine came to the throne, and shed around it a transient ray of glory. He adopted Christianity as the religion of the state, and thus gave a final blow to the pagan mythology, which till now had prevailed throughout the empire. He transferred the seat of government from Rome to Byzantium, now Constantinople; and in the year 395, A. D., the empire was permanently divided

into the Eastern and Western Roman Empire. Constantinople was the capital of the former, and Rome that of the latter.

A careful survey of the history of nations, as well as of individuals, will justify the conclusion, that success obtained by injustice and violence is usually compensated by an equal degree of misery. There is a pendulum in the moral as well as physical world, ever tending to an equalization of justice. Rome had flourished by despoiling the nations, and now she must herself be despoiled. She had shed rivers of blood to satiate her thirst for plunder and dominion, and, though ages had passed, that blood still called from the ground for retribution. It is impossible to read the history of the fall of Rome, and not feel that there was then an overruling tribunal, executing a heavy sentence of condemnation. The fearful agents in this work seemed themselves to feel that they were but the executors of a Divine judgment. There is something appalling in the ideas that possessed the minds of those formidable men, destined to perform the work of vengeance. Alaric assumed the title of the "Scourge of God," and Genseric gave his sail to the breeze, saying to the pilot, "God will direct our course !"

For a considerable period, the Roman dominions were pressed, on nearly all sides, by ferocious tribes of barbarians. These were at first unknown to the Romans ; but about the era of Constantine they had become formidable, and arose in such numbers that the earth seemed to have produced a new race of mankind to complete the empire's destruction. Against such an enemy no courage could avail, no abilities be

successful ; a victory only cut off numbers without a habitation and a name, soon to be succeeded by others equally desperate and obscure. The emperors who had to contend with this people were most of them possessed neither of courage nor abilities. Constantius, Julian, Jovian, and Valentinian successively endeavoured to arrest the tide of barbarism which set in upon their dominions ; but they wanted both the personal energy and the stern soldiery of the early commonwealth to accomplish this desirable object. In the vain attempt to stop an immense inundation of Huns, Alani, and Goths, from the extensive deserts of Tartary and Russia, the Roman armies were greatly weakened, so that the emperors, finding it difficult to raise levies in the provinces, were obliged to hire one body of barbarians to oppose another. This expedient had its use, in circumstances of immediate danger ; but when these were past, the Romans found it as difficult to rid themselves of their new allies as of their former enemies. Thus the empire was not ruined by any particular invasion, but sunk gradually under the weight of numerous attacks made upon it on every side. When the barbarians had wasted one province, those who succeeded the first spoilers proceeded on to another. Their devastations were at first limited to Thrace, Mysia, and Pannonia ; but, when these countries were ruined, they destroyed Macedonia, Thessaly, and Greece, and thence they proceeded to Noricum. The empire was in this manner continually shrinking, and northern Italy at last became the frontier of the Roman dominion.

The valor and conduct of Theodosius in some meas-

ure retarded the progress of destruction ; but, upon his death, the enemy became irresistible. A large body of Goths had been called in to assist the regular forces, under Alaric, their king ; but what was brought in to stop the universal decline proved the last mortal stab to the empire. This Gothic prince, from an ally, became a dangerous foe ; and finally, marching to Rome, made himself master of the city, which he abandoned to be pillaged by his soldiers, A. D. 410.

After this disastrous event, Rome was plundered several times, and Italy was overrun by barbarous invaders, under various denominations, from the remotest skirts of Europe. The inhabitants of Rome, who had sunk into the grossest vices, through the overpowering influence of wealth and prosperity, were quite unable to make any defence. So debased had they become, or so ill regulated was the balance of wealth, that for many years the whole of the lower classes had been fed daily by the emperors from the public granaries. The power of the state was now entirely broken ; the provinces were voluntarily abandoned, or they rebelled, or were seized by the nearest barbarous powers. At length the title of Emperor of the West, which, on one occasion, was put up at public auction by the licentious soldiery, expired ; and, to finish the melancholy account, one of the princes of the barbarians assumed the title of King of Italy. Such was the end of this great empire, that had conquered mankind by its arms, and instructed the world by its wisdom ; that had risen by temperance, and that fell by luxury ; that had been established by a spirit of patriotism, and that sunk into ruin when the empire was become so exten-

sive that the title of "Roman citizen" was but an empty name. Its final dissolution took place in the 480th year of the Christian era, or 1232 years from the date of the foundation of Rome.

Such was the fall of the Western Roman Empire. For ages it continued in darkness; but, in process of time, a new power — that of the Pope — arose in the ancient seat of the emperors, which at last assumed a dominion almost equal to that of the Cæsars. This was checked, as we have related; but the spiritual sway of the Holy See is still exerted with powerful effect over the larger portion of Christendom.

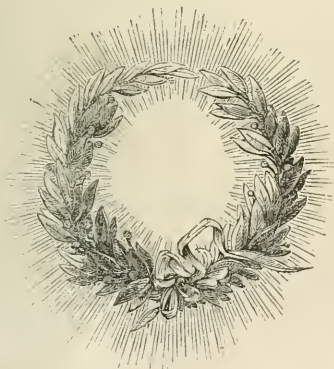


Battle of Navarino.

The Eastern or Greek Empire escaped the destructive rage of the northern barbarians, and during the Gothic ages Constantinople was a great and beautiful

city, and the only place in Europe where there were any remains of the ancient elegance of arts or manners. It was the rendezvous of the crusaders, in the eleventh century, and thus became renowned for its splendor. It gradually lost its ascendancy, and in the year 1453 the capital as well as the empire fell into the hands of the 'Turks, who still retain it.

These grasping unbelievers seized upon Greece, which they ruled with a rod of iron till the year 1821, when the descendants of Leonidas and Lycurgus drew the sword in the cause of liberty. After a bloody struggle, which was terminated in 1827 by the battle of Navarino, they achieved their independence.





Landing of Julius Cæsar in England.

SKETCHES

FROM THE

HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN

JULIUS CÆSAR IN ENGLAND.

ALL histories of England commence with the invasion of Julius Cæsar, the earliest event in that quarter of which we have any authentic account. The Island of Britain was an unknown region to the Romans, and nearly so to the rest of mankind, at the period when Cæsar's conquests had reduced the greater part of Gaul to the Roman government. Britain, lying within sight of the northern shores of Gaul, attracted his notice, and he began to meditate schemes of conquest in that island. He is said to have been prompted to this design by a view of the British pearls, which excited his admiration and cupidity by their great size and beauty. Incited doubtless by the double stimulant of ambition and avarice, he determined to invade this unknown island. The Romans considered all strangers as enemies; no moral scruples or principles of international law interposed to hinder them from turning their arms against any of their neighbours.

To acquire all possible preliminary knowledge of the country he was about to invade, Cæsar convened, from different parts of Gaul, a great number of merchants and adventurers who had visited Britain for trade and other purposes. These he questioned as to the extent of the island, its population and wealth, the manners and customs of the inhabitants, their method of fighting, the harbours of the island fit to receive large ships, and other matters. These men, however, probably disliking the projected enterprise, did not furnish him with satisfactory information. He therefore despatched one of his officers in a galley to spy out the condition of the coast, and in the mean time marched with a strong army into the territory of the Morini, about Calais and Boulogne, and collected a numerous fleet in the harbours of that neighbourhood. The news of the intended invasion soon spread through the southern parts of Britain, and some of the states sent over ambassadors to Cæsar, offering to submit to the government of Rome, and give hostages for their fidelity. He gave them an amicable reception, and sent them back with a prince of the Gauls, whom he instructed to obtain all possible information of the state of the Britons, and to exhort them to enter into alliance with the Romans, which was only a soft and inoffensive term for submission.

Volusenus, the officer first despatched by Cæsar, having returned from examining the British coast, the Roman army embarked at Calais and the neighbouring ports in ninety-eight vessels, set sail, and at one o'clock on the morning of the 26th of August, 55 years before the Christian era, the principal part of the fleet arrived

at Dover Cliff. It was now discovered that the whole country was hostile. The states which had offered submission, finding that this had not averted the invasion, determined to stand upon their defence. They imprisoned Comius, the Gallic prince who had accompanied the ambassadors on their return, raised a numerous army, and marched to that part of the coast where they judged the invaders would attempt to land. Cæsar, on approaching the white shores, which gave this island its ancient name of *Albion*, saw the lofty cliffs covered with armed men. It was impossible to land, in the face of an army, in this spot; and, after lying by till three in the afternoon, the fleet got under sail again, and stood along the coast. Eight miles further eastward, they reached a plain, open shore, where Cæsar determined to land, although the Britons had followed him along the coast, and stood ready to oppose the attempt.

When the Roman soldiers found themselves nearly up to the neck in the water, encumbered by the weight of their armor, and saw the beach covered with troops of fierce barbarians, who rushed to assail them with the greatest fury and resolution, they did not display that confidence and intrepidity which usually marked their conduct on meeting with the enemy. For some time the conflict was maintained with a dubious prospect as to the result. Cæsar, observing the critical situation of his men, ordered several galleys, which drew less water than the transport ships, to approach the shore, and attack the enemy in flank with a general discharge of their engines, slings, and arrows. The Britons, struck with astonishment at the unusual

shape and motion of the galleys, and the playing of the engines, first halted, and then began to give ground. Still many of the Roman soldiers hesitated to leave their ships and encounter at once the waves and the enemy ; at length the standard-bearer of the tenth legion, having first invoked the gods, sprang into the sea, and, advancing with the eagle towards the enemy, cried aloud, "Follow me, fellow-soldiers, unless you would betray the Roman eagle into the hands of the enemy ; — for my part, I am determined to discharge my duty to Cæsar and the Commonwealth." All who liked this bold action, and heard this animating speech, were fired with courage and emulation, plunged into the sea, and rushed toward the shore. The battle now raged more fiercely than ever at the water's edge ; but Cæsar displayed so much activity and judgment in reinforcing his men at the points where they were most hardly pressed, that at length the Roman discipline and skill prevailed over the wild impetuosity of the barbarians, and the whole army, after repulsing their opponents, effected a safe landing. The spot where this engagement took place is supposed to be at the modern town of Deal.

The Britons, in discouragement, renewed their submission to Cæsar, and apologized by their ambassadors for the violence done to Comius, by laying the blame entirely on the unruly multitude. Cæsar again accepted their offers, and took hostages for the fidelity of the suppliants. Their submission, however, lasted no longer than while the Romans were able to keep them in terror by the presence of their army. The first prospect of any threatened disaster to the invad-

ers was the signal for a new defection. On the very day when a peace was agreed upon, eighteen transports of Roman cavalry set sail with a fair wind from Gaul. As they approached the British shore, and began to descry the Roman camp, a sudden storm arose, dispersed the ships, and forced them back into different ports on the continent. This disaster was accompanied by another. On the night after the storm, the moon was at the full, and the unexpected rise of the tide surprised and embarrassed the Romans, familiar mostly with no other shores than those of the Mediterranean, where the ebb and flow of the sea are hardly perceptible. The galleys, which were drawn up on the beach, were overflowed, and the ships at anchor were either dashed to pieces, or greatly damaged. By this sudden and unforeseen mishap, the Romans lost their provisions, and saw themselves without transports to enable them to escape from the island, if threatened with famine or a general rising of the Britons. The whole army was at once thrown into consternation.

A great number of the British chiefs were in the camp, and saw, at once, the whole extent of these disasters. The Romans were now without food, cavalry, or ships, and might, apparently, be cut off at a single blow, or starved into submission. The chiefs held secret consultations, and determined upon a revolt. They withdrew, one after another, under various pretences, from the camp, repaired to their respective states, collected their followers, and animated them to a renewal of the war. A few days afterward, a great cloud of dust was discovered from the Roman camp in the di-

rection in which the seventh legion had been sent out to forage. Cæsar, suspecting what had happened, immediately placed himself at the head of the two cohorts, which were upon guard, and flew toward the place, leaving orders for other bodies of his troops to follow. He found the foraging party engaged in a furious conflict with a numerous body of Britons, who, on horseback and in war-chariots, had suddenly rushed out of the woods and attacked them. The timely arrival of Cæsar saved the party from the imminent danger into which they were thrown by so violent and unexpected an assault. The Britons were held in check, and the Romans retreated slowly, but in safety, to their camp.

Violent storms of rain kept the two parties inactive for several days, during which the force of the Britons was prodigiously strengthened by constant arrivals of men from all parts of the neighbourhood. On the first favorable opportunity, they approached the Roman camp, and attempted to carry it by storm, but were defeated with an immense loss. Once more the Britons offered to yield, and once more Cæsar accepted their submission. The number of hostages was doubled, and this was all that was required of them. Cæsar repaired his shattered fleet, and, after having been three weeks in Britain, abandoned the country, with his army, and returned to Gaul.

Such is Julius Cæsar's own account of his first invasion of Britain, which has been transmitted to us in the *Commentaries* written by him during his campaigns. It is represented as a very glorious and successful expedition. But we are reminded of the lines of Pope :

“Ask why from Britain Cæsar would retreat,
Cæsar himself might whisper, he was beat.”

Had the Britons told their own story, we might have a much clearer notion of the necessities that caused the precipitate retreat of the Romans, who, after spending three weeks in the island, with great expense and loss, abandoned it without leaving a fortress or a man of their own, as an evidence of its subjugation.

Notwithstanding this, Cæsar gave so flattering an account of his exploits in Britain to the senate at Rome, that a solemn thanksgiving of twenty days was decreed in honor of him. Yet he was not backward in perceiving that his fame as the conqueror of the Britons could not be long kept up without more substantial proofs. A new invasion was resolved upon, and a fleet of ships constructed, broader, shallower, and better adapted to the conveyance and landing of troops than those used in the former expedition. In the following spring, when Cæsar returned from Italy to Gaul, he found six hundred of these transports and twenty-eight galleys ready for sea. Embarking in this fleet, he landed his army in Britain, at the same spot as before. The natives, on beholding the approach of so large a number of ships, were struck with consternation, and, instead of opposing the landing of the Romans, as they at first designed, withdrew into the interior.

Cæsar immediately marched in pursuit of them. But at the river Stour, while engaged in a skirmish with a body of the enemy, he received intelligence that another storm had shattered his fleet. He returned in haste, and found that forty of his vessels had foundered,

and that hardly any of the remainder were fit for service. Orders were immediately despatched to Gaul for the building of another fleet ; and Cæsar, being now convinced that there was no safety for his naval force on the tempestuous coast of Britain, undertook the prodigious task of drawing all his ships ashore, and enclosing them within the fortifications of his camp. The vigorous and incessant toil of the whole army accomplished this almost incredible labor in the short space of ten days. Having thus secured the fleet, Cæsar again marched in pursuit of the enemy. They had chosen for their general-in-chief, Cassibelan, prince of the Cassi, a man of great courage and military experience. Several actions were fought, in which the Britons displayed uncommon resolution and skill, and obliged the Romans to observe the most cautious prudence in their marches. Cæsar, on advancing to the Thames, found the enemy drawn up in great force behind a palisade of sharp stakes, on the opposite bank. Not appalled by this formidable show of resistance, he ordered his men immediately to advance and ford the river. The soldiers plunged into the stream, which was so deep that only their heads appeared above water, and rushed upon their antagonists, who, astonished at the boldness of the attack, made only a feeble resistance, and then fled. The spot where this occurred is now known by the name of Coway Stakes.

The Britons now changed their mode of warfare, and contented themselves with harassing the invaders by issuing in small parties from the woods, and attacking them when off their guard. The want of a cordial

and systematic union among the different tribes embarrassed all their efforts for the common defence, and at length Cæsar made himself master of the capital of Cassibelan, a fortified town near the present site of St. Albans. Further resistance was now useless, and that prince made peace with the Romans, and consented to pay a yearly tribute in token of submission. After this general pacification, Cæsar judged it useless to maintain a military force any longer in the island. The army was therefore withdrawn from Britain in September, and the Romans claimed little more than the honor of the conquest. They retained possession of no part of the territory, and, as the nature and amount of the tribute are not specified, we may judge it to have been inconsiderable. For nearly a century afterwards, hardly any thing is known of the affairs of Britain.

At the time of Cæsar's invasion, the whole island of Great Britain probably contained no more inhabitants than are to be found at this day in London. The country was divided into a great number of independent principalities, all under monarchical governments. The prevailing religion was that of the Druids. In regard to arts, sciences, and manners, the Britons were in a state of barbarism. The only art which they possessed in any degree of advancement was that of war. Some of the British tribes were naked, but none of them were unarmed. Many of them were ignorant of the arts of agriculture, spinning, and weaving, but all of them could fight with much courage and skill. This art they had acquired in the incessant wars which kept the petty states of Britain involv-

ed in almost perpetual conflicts with one another ; and, by their skill in arms, they were enabled to maintain a long and glorious struggle for liberty against the Romans, who far excelled all the rest of mankind in the dreadful art of subduing and destroying their fellow-creatures.

The British infantry were swift of foot, and very expert in swimming rivers and passing over fens and marshes, which enabled them to make sudden and unexpected attacks. They were not encumbered with much clothing, many of them being almost naked, having no defensive armor except light shields. They carried long and broad swords without points, and spears with round brass bells at the butt end to make a loud noise when they engaged the enemy's horse. The British cavalry were accustomed to dismount occasionally and fight on foot ; and their horses were so well trained that they stood firm in their places till their riders returned. But the most remarkable of the British combatants were those who fought in chariots. This singular art of war was almost peculiar to the ancient Britons, and they greatly excelled in it. The British chariots merit, therefore, a particular description.

When we consider the imperfect state of some of the most useful arts in Britain before the invasion of the Romans, we could hardly expect to find here wheel-carriages of any kind ; much less chariots for purposes of state, pleasure, and war, of various forms, and of curious and elegant workmanship. It appears, however, from the concurring testimony of many ancient writers of unquestionable credit, that the Britons possessed such chariots in prodigious numbers, even in

the most remote and savage parts of the island. Six different kinds are mentioned by name in the Greek and Roman authors. Three of these, the *covinus*, the *essedum*, and the *rheda*, were war-chariots. The *covinus* was a terrible instrument of destruction ; it was furnished with scythes and hooks, and was built light, to drive with great force and rapidity through the ranks of the enemy. The prodigious numbers of these chariots, and the dexterity with which the barbarians managed them, excite our wonder. Cæsar informs us that Cassibelan, after dismissing all his other forces, retained about him no less than four thousand chariot-warriors. The same careful observer thus describes their method of fighting ; “ First, they drive their chariots forward, and throw their darts ; by the fright they occasion the horses, and the noise of the wheels, they often break the ranks of the enemy. When they have forced their way into the midst of the cavalry, they leap from their chariots and fight on foot. The drivers withdraw a short distance from the combat, and station themselves in such a manner as to favor the retreat of their countrymen, should they be overpowered by the enemy. Thus in action they perform the part both of nimble horsemen and of stable infantry ; and by continual exercise they have acquired so wonderful a degree of expertness, that, in the most steep and difficult places, they can stop their horses when at full speed, turn them which way they please, run out upon the shaft, rest on the harness, and throw themselves back into their chariots with inconceivable dexterity.”

The Britons painted themselves like the American Indians, and practised the art of tattooing as it is now

in use among the South Sea islanders. They had some rude notions of sculpture, and made images of clay, which they hardened in the fire. They excelled in wicker-work, and their baskets were sent to Rome, where they were much admired. They seem to have been the inventors of this domestic utensil, and the name which they gave it, *bascauda*, is one of the few words of their language which is recognized in our modern English tongue.

ALFRED AND HIS TIMES.

THE semi-barbarous era of the Anglo-Saxons is illuminated by a ray of glory from the reign of Alfred, a prince on whom an impartial posterity has conferred the epithet of "the Great." The kings, his predecessors, are chiefly known to us by their military achievements; but it is the distinguishing praise of Alfred, that he was not only a warrior, but also the patron of the arts, and the legislator of his people. He was the son of Æthelwolf, king of the West Saxons, and was born in 849. He was the youngest of four sons, but his beauty, vivacity, and playfulness endeared him in a particular manner to his parents, who predicted that he would one day prove the chief ornament of the family. In his fifth year, his father sent him to Rome to be crowned by the Pope.

Letters were in a declining state among the Anglo-Saxons, and the nobility divided their time between



Savage Britons.



Saxons.

the occupations of war and the pleasures of the chase. But the mother of Alfred had the merit of awakening in his mind that passion for learning by which he became so honorably distinguished among his contemporaries. She offered a Saxon poem, elegantly written and illuminated, as a reward to the first of her children who should learn to read it. The emulation of Alfred was excited ; he applied himself to study with diligence, performed it to the satisfaction of his mother, and received the prize of his industry. — During the reign of his brothers, he possessed the government of a petty district, with the title of King.

In the twenty-second year of his age he succeeded to the crown. England was then suffering from the inroads of the Danes, who had invaded the country at different periods for nearly a century preceding. Alfred's first campaign against them was unfortunate ; at the battle of Wilton, the Saxon army was defeated, and he found it necessary to negotiate. The Danes, probably induced by a valuable present, withdrew to London. But this pacification was not of long continuance. New bands of adventurers arrived from Denmark, and the invaders recommenced hostilities with such success that in a short time the whole Anglo-Saxon territory fell under their dominion, except the districts south of the Thames and north of the Tyne. The devastations of war now desolated the country in almost every quarter. Towns, villages, and convents were ravaged and burnt to the ground, and the route of the conquerors might be traced by smoking ruins, and the mangled remains of the victims of their barbarity. The Danish fleets in the mean time ravaged

the coast. Alfred, unable to oppose any efficient force against so formidable an army, again had recourse to negotiation. Guthrum, the Danish leader, agreed for a considerable sum to retire out of Alfred's kingdom of Wessex; but, the perfidy of the Danes being notorious, a number of hostages were demanded. The hostages were given. Alfred next required their oaths, and they swore by their bracelets. He was not satisfied, and they swore by the relics of the Christian Saints. Believing that he had bound them now by the strongest ties, he peacefully awaited their departure; but in the dead of night a body of the Danes fell upon the Saxon cavalry, put them to the sword, mounted the horses of the slain, and by a rapid march surprised and captured Exeter.

Alfred now saw the necessity of a naval force in order to expel the invaders from his territories. He accordingly equipped a few vessels, and, manning them with foreign adventurers, sailed in quest of the enemy. Fortune threw in his way a Danish fleet of seven ships, one of which he captured, and the others escaped. This trifling success raised his hopes. He built more ships and galleys, and, by unceasing efforts, he at last succeeded in creating a navy. He was victorious at sea, and the Danes lost a hundred and twenty ships, partly by capture and partly by shipwreck. Guthrum was now compelled to treat in earnest, and he evacuated Alfred's dominions.

The crafty Dane, however, did not abandon his resolution of subjugating the Anglo-Saxons. He determined on the extraordinary expedient of a winter campaign, which had been hitherto unknown among

his countrymen. In the beginning of the year 878, his followers received an unexpected summons to meet him on horseback at an appointed place. By a sudden attack they made themselves masters of Chippenham, and Alfred narrowly escaped being taken prisoner. The Saxons were surprised by the enemy before they heard of the war, and the king saw himself surrounded by the invaders without any force to resist them. Many of the inhabitants fled the kingdom, others submitted to the conquerors, and Alfred, almost entirely abandoned by his people, was compelled to betake himself to flight, and wander, a solitary fugitive, on foot, among the morasses of Somersetshire. This is the period of the lowest depression of his fortunes, and the point of most romantic interest in his history. At length he found a secure retreat in a small island situated in a marshy spot at the confluence of the Thone and the Parret, which afterwards obtained the name of Æthelingay, or Prince's Island.

During his lone wanderings, as the Saxon histories inform us, he found a shelter at one time in the house of a man who kept his cattle. On a certain day, the good woman of the house made some cakes and put them before the fire to bake, charging Alfred, who sat by, trimming his bow and arrows, to take care that they did not burn; but the king, either absorbed in thought or intent on his work, neglected the task, and the careful housewife on her return found them spoiled by the fire. She gave the monarch a severe scolding, and reminded him, sarcastically, that he was always ready enough to eat her cakes, though he was too lazy to see to their baking. Few of Alfred's biographers

have been willing to omit this curious anecdote, which stands upon as good evidence as the case will admit. The reader will excuse us for adding another. After Alfred had established himself in his retreat at Æthelingay, he was joined by his queen. While they sat alone one day, the king beguiling the tedium of the hours by reading aloud to his wife, he was interrupted by a poor beggar who entreated for something to eat. Alfred bade the queen see what they had in the cupboard; she examined and answered, "One small loaf." He directed her to divide it with the beggar, and trust to Providence for a further supply for themselves. We omit the marvellous and miraculous circumstances with which the monkish historians have embellished the narrative of this simple deed of charity.

By degrees the retreat of Alfred became known to his countrymen, and he was joined by many trusty adherents. At their head he occasionally issued from his concealment, intercepted straggling parties of the Danes, and returned laden with the spoils of the enemy. As his associates multiplied, these excursions were more frequent and successful; a fort was built on the island, and a bridge to connect it with the main land. In the mean time another strong body of Danes had landed in England, and laid siege to the castle of Kynwith. It had no other fortification than a loose wall, after the manner of the ancient Britons, but its position, on the summit of a lofty rock, rendered it almost impregnable. The Danish leader was too prudent to hazard an assault, and pitched his camp at the foot of the rock, in the confident expectation that the want of water would compel the garrison to surrender.

But the Saxons, gathering courage from despair, left their intrenchments at the dawn of morning, burst into the enemy's quarters, slew their leader with twelve hundred men, and drove the remainder to their fleet. Among the trophies of this victory was the mysterious standard of the Raven, woven in one noon-tide by the three daughters of Ragnar. Great importance was attached by the superstitious Danes to this magical banner. As they marched to battle, they were accustomed to observe the picture of the raven embroidered upon its folds. If it appeared to flap its wings, it was a sure omen of victory ; but if it hung motionless in the air, they anticipated a certain defeat.

Highly encouraged by this brilliant success, the Saxons obeyed the summons of Alfred to meet him at Selwood forest, and flocked in great numbers to the rendezvous. At the appearance of their sovereign, the wood reëchoed with their acclamations, and every heart beat with the confidence of victory. The spot, however, was too confined to receive the multitudes that hastened to the royal standard, and the next morning the camp was removed to Iglea, a spacious plain in the neighbourhood. The day was spent in making preparations for the conflict. A strong army of Danes was encamped not far off ; and, if we may believe the Saxon historians, Alfred engaged in a bold adventure to inform himself of the strength and position of the enemy. Disguising himself as a wandering harper, he ventured into the Danish camp, which he traversed in all parts, critically examining every object. He was even admitted into the tents of the Danish leaders, whom he entertained by an exhibition of his musical skill. Having thus obtained full information of the

state of the enemy's forces, he returned unsuspected, and prepared for the attack.

The two armies met at Eddington. As they approached each other, they vociferated shouts of mutual defiance; and, after the discharge of their missiles, rushed to close combat. The shock of the two nations, the efforts of their leaders, the fluctuations of victory, and the alternate hopes and fears of the contending parties, we shall not attempt to describe. At length the perseverance of the Saxons bore down all opposition, and the Danes, after an obstinate defence, fled in crowds to their camp. The pursuit was not less sanguinary than the engagement. The Saxons put to death every fugitive who fell into their hands. The Danes were besieged in their camp, and Guthrum on the fourteenth day offered to capitulate. The terms imposed by Alfred were, that the king and principal chieftains should embrace Christianity, and that the Danes should entirely evacuate the Saxon territory. These terms were complied with, and the victory of Eddington established the independence of Alfred's kingdom.

From this period he suffered comparatively little annoyance from enemies for the space of fifteen years, and found himself at leisure to attend to the improvement and civilization of his people. The towns and villages were put in a state of defence, and the naval force was strengthened. Ships were built of larger dimensions than those of the Danes; they were double the length, and constructed with higher decks, which gave the Saxons great advantage in battle. Several of these ships had above thirty oars on each side.

Alfred then turned his attention to the domestic concerns of the country. During the ravages of the Danes, the whole fabric of civil government had been nearly dissolved. The courts had been closed, and all sorts of crimes committed with impunity. The Saxons, during this period of license and rapine, had caught from the Danes a spirit of insubordination, a contempt for peace, justice, and religion. Alfred undertook the arduous task of remedying these evils, and, by the most untiring assiduity and vigilance, he accomplished his great purpose. The ignorant, capricious, and despotic judges were displaced or reformed. The salutary institutions of the ancient Saxon kings were restored, and a new code of laws was digested, supplying existing deficiencies, and adapted to the circumstances of the times. Alfred heard appeals with the most patient attention. In cases of importance, he revised the proceedings at his leisure, and the inferior magistrates trembled at the impartiality and severe justice of their sovereign. Forty-four magistrates are said to have been put to death by his order in one year, for illegal and iniquitous proceedings. This severity caused a complete revolution in an important branch of public manners. The judges not only became upright, but the people honest and orderly. Theft and murder were now as remarkable for their rarity as in former times for their frequency. To prove the reformation of his subjects, Alfred, we are told, caused valuable jewels to be hung up in sight along the highways, which no man ventured to remove; and it is further stated, that, if a traveller lost his purse on the road, he would, at the end of a month, find it lying, untouched, on the same spot. As

literal facts, we may reasonably discredit these tales; but, even if pure inventions, they serve to show the high estimation in which Alfred's administration of justice was held by his posterity.

Learning had fallen into so deplorable a state during the Danish invasions, that, on the accession of Alfred to the throne, his whole dominions could hardly boast of one scholar able to read Latin. The churches and monasteries, the only seminaries of learning in that age, had been destroyed. The king, who never lost his youthful passion for knowledge, endeavoured to promote literary studies among his people. He invited to his court the most distinguished scholars from foreign countries, and, with their assistance, he began, in his thirty-ninth year, to apply himself to the study of Roman literature. He established schools in various places, and made endeavours that the children of every freeman, whose circumstances would allow it, should learn reading and writing, and that all persons, designed for civil or ecclesiastical employments, should be instructed in Latin.

Alfred's judicial reforms constituted the most lasting memorial of his genius. He divided all England into shires or counties, the counties into hundreds, and the hundreds into tythings. In this manner, all the inhabitants of the kingdom were obliged to belong to some tything, and whoever did not was looked upon as a vagabond, and denied the protection of the law. Every householder was held to answer for his wife, his children under fifteen years of age, and his domestics. If any one, by his way of living, fell under suspicion of irregularity, he was compelled to give security for

his good behaviour; and, in case he could procure none, the tything threw him into prison, to prevent their being liable to a penalty, should he commit any offence. Thus the householders being responsible for their families, the tythings for the householders, the hundreds for the tythings, and the counties for the hundreds, every one was watchful over his neighbour's actions. If a stranger, guilty of any crime, made his escape, information was taken of the house where he had lodged, and, if he had been there three days, the master was condemned to pay the fine. As Alfred had the sagacity to perceive that the spirit of oppression naturally grew upon men in authority, he studied to prevent abuses in the decisions of the magistrates. For this purpose, he provided, that, in all criminal cases, twelve men, selected for the purpose, should determine concerning the facts alleged, and the judge give sentence according to their verdict. Such was the origin of the English trial by jury, the distinguishing feature of modern jurisprudence.

The progress which this great prince made in learning, while occupied in the busy scenes of war and legislation, affords a remarkable instance of his economy of time, industry, and assiduity in study. He was the best Saxon poet of his age, an excellent grammarian, orator, architect, geometrician, and historian. He translated from the Latin into Saxon, "Boëthius de Consolatione," "Gregory's Pastoral," "Bede's Ecclesiastical History," and the "Epitome of Orosius," besides composing several original works. While he lay concealed at Æthelingay, he made a vow to dedicate to the service of God a third part of his time,

as soon as he should be restored to a tranquil condition. He was punctual to this vow, and allotted eight hours every day to acts of devotion, eight to public affairs, and the remainder to sleep, study, and necessary refreshment. As clocks and hour-glasses were not yet known in England, he measured time with wax candles marked with colored lines for the hours; and, to guard them from irregular consumption on account of the wind, he is said to have invented horn lanterns. This is probably the most humble domestic utensil that ever owed its origin to a king. Napoleon, indeed, invented a pillow with a cavity to fit the ear,—but this was a small compensation for having made half the world lie uneasy in their beds.

After a glorious reign of more than twenty-five years, Alfred died on the 26th of October, in the year 900. He made liberal bequests in his will, and, in particular, forbade his heirs to invade the liberty of those persons whom he had set free. “For God’s love,” says he, “and for the advantage of my soul, I will that they be masters of their own freedom and of their own will. And, in the name of the living God, I entreat that no man disturb them by exaction of money, or in any other manner, but that they be left at liberty to serve any lord whom they may choose”:—a striking coincidence between the last will and testament of two great men,—Alfred and Washington.

CANUTE AND HIS TIMES.



Canute reproving his Flatterers.

AMONG the Danish kings of England, Canute stands preëminent for his wisdom and military prowess. His father, Sweyn, king of Denmark, after a most successful campaign against the Saxons, entered London in triumph, and England was completely conquered. But before the crown could be placed upon his head, he was snatched away by a sudden death, in February, 1014. The dejected spirits of the conquered nation revived at this event, and they again rose in resistance against the invaders. The Danes, taken unawares by this sudden renewal of hostilities, were defeated with great loss, and forced to take refuge on board their ships. Canute, who succeeded his father, sailed to

Denmark to take possession of that kingdom. Having settled the affairs of his hereditary dominions, he returned to assert his claim to the crown of England.

He quickly subdued several districts, and obtained a firm footing in the country. Ethelred, the Saxon king, maintained himself at London, where he died. Edmund, his son, was crowned king by the Archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by a very few of the English nobility and clergy ; but his affairs were in so unpromising a state, that far the greater part of the nobility attended Canute at Southampton, where they swore allegiance to him as their king, and abjured all the posterity of Ethelred. After these ceremonies, both these princes prepared to contend for the crown of England with such spirit and valor as showed that neither of them was unworthy of the prize. Edmund, who, from his courage and resolution in war, had obtained the surname of *Ironside*, hastened to Wessex, where his party was in considerable strength. Canute, taking advantage of his absence, laid siege to London, but the bravery of the citizens baffled all his efforts. Edmund forced him to raise the siege. Five bloody battles were fought, and London was besieged three times during the year 1016. A treaty followed, by which the kingdom was divided between the rival kings. Edmund fell by assassination shortly after this, and Canute was acknowledged king of all England by a general assembly of all the chief persons of the nobility and clergy held at London in 1017.

Having secured himself in his new dominion, this politic prince undertook the performance of several meritorious acts of justice. In the course of the pre-

ceding wars, some of the English nobles had shamefully betrayed the cause of their king and country. As long as Canute needed the treason, he cherished the traitors ; but as soon as he found himself in peaceable possession of the throne, he banished some of them, and put others to death. Still further to gain the affections of his English subjects, he married the widow of the late king Ethelred. By these and many other prudent measures, he found himself so firmly seated on the throne, that he ventured, in 1019, to make a voyage to Denmark, which kingdom was then at war with Sweden. He passed a year on this visit, and, on his return to England, found every thing in the most perfect tranquillity, which continued several years. During this time, he occupied himself in making judicious laws, building churches and monasteries, and in other popular and pious works.

In the year 1028, he undertook an expedition into Norway, reviving some old pretensions which he had to the crown of that kingdom. Olaus, the actual sovereign, was a weak and unwarlike prince, and Canute judged this a favorable opportunity to enforce his claims. By intriguing with the Norwegian nobility, he formed a strong party in that country favorable to his interests. He then sailed with a powerful army for Denmark, whence he suddenly crossed the sound and landed in Norway. Olaus, totally ignorant of his designs, was taken by surprise at this sudden invasion, and was still more astonished to see the greater part of his subjects join the enemy. Unable to resist the invaders, he had no resource but to abandon the kingdom, and save himself by flight. Olaus is said to have

lost the attachment of his people by his untimely zeal and vain endeavours to restrain them from piracy, a practice very common at that period among the nations of Northern Europe. Canute was crowned king of Norway; and, two years after, the exiled prince, attempting to recover his dominions, was slain by his own people, which left Canute in peaceable possession of the throne.

The conquest of Norway seems fully to have satisfied his ambition and satiated his passion for war. From that time, laying aside all thoughts of augmenting his dominions, he gave himself up to acts of devotion, building and enriching churches and monasteries. Although a wise, and in many respects a great prince, he was not superior to the degrading superstition which prevailed in that age of intellectual darkness. Influenced chiefly by this feeling, he made a pilgrimage to Rome in 1031, attended by a numerous and splendid train of nobility, and lavished greater sums of money upon the churches and clergy of that city than any foreign prince had ever done before. He obtained, in requital, from the Pope, some additional privileges for the English college at Rome, and the travellers who visited the tombs of the apostles; but what he probably valued more than all the rest was a plenary pardon of all his sins, and the special friendship of St. Peter.

On his return to England, he commenced hostilities against the Scots on the following account. During the early invasions of the Danes, it became necessary very frequently to bribe them with money to desist from their depredations and leave the country. The

expense of this, and the maintenance of armies for defence, much exceeded the ordinary revenues of the crown. A land-tax was, therefore, imposed, called *Danegeld*, or the Danes' pay. The Scottish kings held the province of Cumberland by a feudal tenure from the English crown; but they had constantly refused to pay this ignominious tax. Canute determined no longer to allow this delinquency, and, raising an army, he marched toward the North to enforce the payment of the *Danegeld* or expel the Scots from England. Malcolm, the Scottish king, knew himself to be unable to resist so powerful a foe, and, before the two nations came to battle, he thought fit to compromise the quarrel without bloodshed. He saved his honor by granting Cumberland to his grandson Duncan, who agreed to pay the tribute.

The remainder of the reign of Canute offers little to attract the notice of the historian. All his dominions enjoyed a profound peace till his death, on the 12th of November, 1035. The British annalists have not scrupled to give this prince the name of Great, an honor which he merits less perhaps by his conquests than by the pacific portion of his life. His title to the kingdoms which he subjugated was very questionable, to say the least. He shed much blood, and he trampled upon religion and justice, for his own aggrandizement. But, if there be no exaggeration in what historians say of him, many years before his death he became just, humble, modest, religious, and truly wise. From the time that he saw himself firmly fixed on the throne, he gave daily marks of piety, justice, and moderation, which gained him the affection of his subjects

and the esteem of foreigners. A prince so prosperous and powerful, the sovereign of three great kingdoms, could not be destitute of flatterers. Some of his courtiers, if we may believe recorded accounts, carried their absurd adulation to so extravagant a length as to declare, in his presence, that the very elements were under his control, and nothing in nature dared disobey his commands.

One day, while walking with his attendants by the seaside at Southampton, he undertook to rebuke this wretched sycophancy in a striking manner. He ordered his chair to be placed on the beach, while the tide was beginning to rise ; and, taking his seat, he exclaimed to the waters, in a voice of authority, " O sea ! thou art under my control, and the land on which I sit is mine : I charge thee to approach no further, nor dare to wet the feet of thy sovereign ! " But the rising billows, regardless of his command, dashed upon the shore and forced him to retire. The king turned to his flatterers, and said, " Learn from this example the insignificance of all human power, and that God alone is omnipotent ! " He then took the crown from his head, and, we are told, never wore it afterwards, but ordered it to be placed on the crucifix at Winchester.

Canute was the greatest and most powerful monarch of his time. Though he had been baptized in his infancy, he knew little of the doctrines of Christianity in the early part of his career. But, after the conclusion of the wars which seated him on the English throne, the ferocity of his disposition was softened by the precepts of religion ; he entered deeply and with sincerity

into the devotion of the times, and the sanguinary seeking was gradually moulded into a just and beneficent monarch. He often lamented the bloodshed and misery which his own rapacity and that of his father had inflicted on the English people, and acknowledged it his duty to make a compensation for their sufferings by a peaceful and equitable reign. In a Wittenagemote at Oxford, he persuaded the English and Danish thanes to forgive each other any existing cause of offence, and to promise a mutual friendship for the future.

As a legislator, Canute is entitled to high praise. He compiled a code of laws from the enactments of former kings, with such additions as were required by the existing state of society. By the incorporation of the Danes with the Saxons, the rites of paganism again made their appearance in England. Canute forbade the worship of the heathen gods, of the sun and moon, of fire and water, of stones and fountains, of forests and trees. He denounced punishments against those who pretended to deal in witchcraft, and the "workers of death," whether by lots, or flame, or any other charms. He prohibited the custom of sending Christians for sale into foreign countries, not from any disapprobation of slavery itself, but because such Christians would be in danger of falling into the hands of infidel masters, and of being seduced from their religion. He undertook to relieve his people from a portion of the burdens arising from feudal services, which in England, as well as in the other European nations, had long been on the increase.

The sincerity and earnestness with which he studied the welfare of his subjects may be seen from the fol-

lowing extract from a letter which he addressed to them while on his journey to Rome, and which may be considered as a sort of public proclamation: "Now, therefore, be it known to you all, that I have dedicated my life to the service of God, to govern my kingdom with equity, and to observe justice in all things. If, by the violence and negligence of youth, I have violated justice heretofore, it is my intention, with the help of God, to make full compensation. Therefore I beg and command those to whom I have confided the government, as they wish to preserve my friendship, or save their own souls, to do no injustice, either to rich or poor. Let all persons, whether noble or ignoble, obtain their rights according to law; from which no deviation shall be allowed, either from fear of me or through favor to the powerful, or for the purpose of supplying my treasury. I have no need of money raised by injustice."



THE NORMAN CONQUEST.



Saxons.

IN the eleventh century, the Anglo-Saxons, originally the fiercest nation of the North of Europe, had become changed into a submissive and unwarlike people by the combined influences of luxury, a great landed aristocracy, and a richly endowed hierarchy. Their sovereigns had become men of feeble minds; their nobles were factious and effeminate; the clergy corrupt and ignorant, and the people servile and depressed. All the venerated forms of the Saxon institutions existed, but their spirit had evaporated. Their towns were increasing in population; their freedmen were multiplying; and their lands were subject to the *ferd*, or military expedition, an effective obligation for

the national defence. But, amid all these means of prosperity, an intellectual torpidity had, since the days of Athelstan, pervaded the country. Canute had, indeed, impressed a new feature of grandeur and energy on the aspect of the court, but his example was solitary and its effect transient. His children and successors disgraced his name; and after his death the Anglo-Saxons sunk into a lethargic and sensual state. England was slumbering in this decline, when the Norman Conquest, like a moral earthquake, suddenly shook it to the centre, broke up and hurled into ruin all its ancient aristocracy, swept away the native proprietors of the soil, overturned the corrupt habits of the population, kindled a vigorous spirit of life and action in all classes of society, and raised from the mighty ruins with which it overspread the country an entirely new character of government.

William, Duke of Normandy, was the leader of this great enterprise. Personal resentment concurred with ambition to stimulate him to the invasion of England. He claimed the crown by legal right, on the death of Edward the Confessor; but Harold, Duke of Northumberland, violating his oath, had possessed himself of the throne. William determined to resort to arms to enforce his claim. He applied to the Pope to sanction his undertaking. The Pope sent him a consecrated flag, and a bull authorizing the descent upon England, in the year 1066.

William published his war-ban in the countries adjacent. He offered a large sum of money and the pillage of England, to every man of tall and robust stature who would serve either with the lance, the

sword, or the crossbow ; and a multitude poured in from all parts, from far and near, from north and from south, from Maine and from Anjou, from Poitou and from Brittany, from Flanders, from Aquitaine, and from Burgundy, from Piedmont, and the borders of the Rhine. All the adventurers by profession, all the brave and vagabond spirits of Europe, came eagerly at his call. Some were knights, and captains of war ; others simple foot soldiers, and “ servants at arms,” — such was the phrase of the time. Some demanded money in hand, others were content with their passage, and all the booty they could gain. Many wished for an estate in England, a domain, a castle, a town ; while others simply bargained for a Saxon wife. William refused no one ; and during the spring and the summer, in all parts of Normandy, workmen of every kind were employed in building and equipping vessels.

During these preparations, William presented himself, at St. Germain, before Philip, king of France, and, saluting him with a deference which his ancestors had not always paid to their sovereigns, “ You are my seigneur,” said he ; “ if it please you to aid me, and that God give me grace to obtain my right in England, I promise to do you homage for that realm, as if I held it of you.” Philip assembled his council of barons and freemen, without whom he could decide no important affair. The barons were of opinion that he could in no wise aid William in his conquest. “ You know,” said they to their king, “ how little the Normans obey you now, — they will obey you less, if they possess England. Besides, it will be a great expense to aid the Duke in his enterprise ; and, if it fail, we

shall have the English for our mortal enemies." William, thus repulsed, retired in discontent from Philip.

The rendezvous for the vessels and men-at-arms was at the mouth of the Dive, a river which falls into the sea between the Seine and the Orne. For a month the winds were contrary, and the Norman fleet was detained in the harbour. At length a southern breeze carried it to St. Valery near Dieppe. Then the bad weather recommenced, and it was necessary to cast anchor, and wait several days. During this time the tempest shattered several vessels, and many of their crews perished. At this accident, murmurings arose among the troops already fatigued with their long delay. The soldiers, idle in their tents, passed the day in conversing upon the dangers of the voyage, and the difficulties of the enterprise they had undertaken. "There has yet been no battle," said they, "and already several of our companions are no more!" Then they fell to examining and calculating the number of dead bodies which the sea had thrown upon the shore. These sights abated the ardor of the adventurers who had enlisted with so much zeal, and some broke their engagement and retired. "Very foolish," said the soldiers, "very foolish is the man who pretends to conquer another's land; God is offended at such designs, and now he shows his anger by refusing us a favorable wind!" At last, perhaps from real superstition, perhaps for the mere purpose of diverting their followers from unwelcome thoughts, the Norman chiefs conducted the relics of St. Valery in great pomp, and with a long procession, through the camp. All the

army began to pray, and the following night the wind sprang up just as they had been desiring.

Four hundred ships, and upwards of one thousand transport boats, left the shore at the same signal. William's ship took the lead, and carried at its mast-head the banner sent from the Pope. The sails were of divers colors, and on many parts of them were painted the three lions, the arms of the Normans. At the prow was carved the figure of a child carrying a bended bow with an arrow ready to fly. This vessel, a better sailer than the rest, headed the expedition during the day, and at night was far in the advance. On the following morning, the Duke bade a sailor climb to the top of the mainmast and see if there were any other vessels coming. "I only see," said the sailor, "the sky and the ocean," — and thereupon the anchor was cast. The Duke affected gayety, in order to put down any appearance of care or fear among his friends; he ordered a sumptuous repast, and wines highly spiced. Presently the sailor mounted again; and this time he said he saw four vessels; and directly after he cried, "I see a forest of masts and sails."

William landed his army at Pevensey in Sussex. — The news of the descent of the Normans was quickly brought to Harold, who was in the North of England, engaged in repelling an incursion of the Norwegians, and did not expect this invasion till the following spring. He immediately abandoned his enterprise in the North, and marched to give these new enemies battle. He proceeded by hasty marches to London, where the Duke sent ambassadors to him, requiring him to resign the crown. He was so inflamed at the haugh-

tininess of this proceeding, that he could hardly be restrained from ill treating the ambassadors. He replied by a menacing and insulting message, and, having drawn all his forces together, encamped about nine miles from the Normans. Whilst the two armies lay thus near one another, spies were continually sent out on both sides, each leader being desirous of knowing the strength and position of his enemy.

Whilst they were preparing for a conflict, which was to decide the fate of both princes, Duke William seemed to abate something of his haughtiness. The thoughts of a battle in an enemy's country, where his loss would be irretrievable, inspired him with some dread of the event. On the other hand, he could not help reflecting on the blood that was about to be shed in a quarrel, the justice of which was not quite apparent. He sent Harold, by the hands of a certain monk, these four proposals, of which he might take his choice. The first was, to resign the crown, as he was bound by oath. By the second, he offered to return into Normandy, provided Harold would do him homage for the kingdom of England. By the third, he offered to refer the quarrel to the Pope. Lastly, he proposed to decide the dispute by single combat. It is no wonder that Harold rejected these proposals, seeing they were all advantageous to the Duke. His answer therefore was, God should determine, on the morrow, the justice of their respective claims.

The English spent the whole night in carousing and singing, as if they were sure of the victory. The Normans, on the contrary, were employed in preparing for the battle, and in offering up prayers for success.

At length, on the 14th of October, 1066, Harold's birthday, the two armies engaged. In the front of the English stood the Kentish men, a privilege which they had enjoyed ever since the Heptarchy. Harold placed himself in the centre, and fought on foot, that his men might be the more encouraged by seeing their king sharing the danger of the meanest soldier. The Normans began the fight with a volley of arrows, which, being shot upwards, flew like a thick cloud over the heads of the foremost body of the English. As their ranks were close, the arrows in falling did great execution. The English, not being used to this manner of fighting, were at first thrown into disorder, but soon rallied, and gave the Normans so warm a reception, that they were obliged to draw back and take breath. Quickly after, they renewed the attack, but met with as brave a resistance as before. The presence of their leaders animating the soldiers, they everywhere fought with equal bravery, without the least signs of advantage on either side. We may judge of the valor of both armies by the length of the battle, which began at seven in the morning, and lasted till night.

The event was yet very uncertain, when Duke William bethought himself of a stratagem. Perceiving there was no breaking the ranks of the English, he ordered his troops to retreat as they fought, as if they were discouraged, but to be very careful to keep their ranks. This order being executed, the English thought their enemies defeated. They set up a great shout, and pressed eagerly onward. In the hurry of the pursuit, they broke their ranks, when the Normans instantly turned upon them, and put them to the rout.

Harold, seeing the victory on the point of being snatched from his hands, rallied the fugitives, and succeeded in collecting a considerable body, with which he made an obstinate stand upon a rising ground in the neighbourhood. The Normans made another desperate attack, and Harold was shot through the brain with an arrow. This loss completed the rout of the Saxons, who gave way, and fled in every direction. The victory of William was complete; fifteen thousand of his men had fallen, but the vanquished lost a still greater number, as no quarter was given either during the battle, or in the pursuit of the fugitives. Such was the issue of the celebrated battle of Hastings, the most important in its consequences that was ever fought in England. The whole realm immediately submitted to the conqueror.

William reigned over England more than twenty years. Under his administration, the government of the kingdom, the laws, the language, and the national character underwent an important change. By this conquest, and the rebellions which followed, almost all the Anglo-Saxon nobility were driven into exile, or dispossessed of their territories, and the greater part of all the landed property of England fell into the hands of the king, who rewarded his followers for their services, by granting them the domains which he had seized or confiscated. He made military service the indispensable condition of these donations, and thus the feudal system became established to the full extent in England. It was his early and constant policy to secure the submission of the country by building castles in every part, and committing them, with grants of

land, to warlike chieftains, on whose fidelity and activity he could rely. This system, while it completed the conquest of the island, also filled it with a new military aristocracy, vigorous from its youth, formidable in its means of defence to effect the purpose of its establishment, and independent, in its own domains, of the crown, by the ancient laws and customs of the country. It was an important peculiarity of the Norman conquest, that, though it changed the individual persons of the proprietary body of England, it left many of its civil institutions undestroyed, or changed only in name. The Wittenagemote still survived under the appellation of *parliament*. The Norman conquest was no abridgment of the liberties of England; on the contrary, it established a powerful and active aristocracy, which was strong enough, at times, to give the law to the sovereign. It promoted the emancipation of the servile, and protected the privileges of the free.

The great benefit derived by England from the Norman conquest was the new vigor and spirit which it gave to the national mind. The torpor, debility, and degradation of sensuality and sloth, — without literature, arts, or laudable pursuits; and the factions and vices of a corrupted aristocracy and debased clergy, had enervated the Anglo-Saxon intellect. By the conquest, a new race of men was spread over the whole kingdom, with a peculiar principle inspiring the emulation of every one. This was that love of glory, which made every Norman restless till he had acquired personal improvement and distinction. The wealth and situation of England opened new avenues to fame, and drew from all parts of Europe the most aspiring,

and the most able men to enter the lists for honor and profit. A new creative vigor appeared afterward in every field of human merit. Activity and enterprise became the characteristic qualities of the nation; and the different classes, attaching themselves to various pursuits, infused the spirit, and enlarged the boundaries, of improvement in all. In war, in religion, literature, trade, and amusements, the Anglo-Normans became equally active and indefatigable.

The intermixture of the Norman-French with the Anglo-Saxon tongue formed the modern English language, superior to either of its parents in copiousness, energy, and expression. William is generally supposed to have established the *coever-fu*, or curfew, by which, on the ringing of a bell at eight o'clock in the evening, all fires were commanded to be put out. Its original design is said to have been to prevent nightly meetings for conspiracies. A more important undertaking, by which the Conqueror has left a memorial of his reign to the present generation, was the compilation of the Domesday Book. This was the greatest financial operation of his life. It was a general inquest and survey, taken throughout the country, of the quantity of lands chargeable with military service; with a record of the great proprietors, the servile population, and established payments. It was designed to ascertain the legal rights of the crown, and to afford a knowledge of the state of the property of the country. The facts required were, for the most part, verified by the oaths of a competent number of persons in each district. The original of the record thus formed is still preserved in the Exchequer at London.



King John signing Magna Charta.

MAGNA CHARTA.

THE despotism of William the Conqueror, and the feudal customs established by him in England, resulted at times in the grossest abuses in government, by which both the barons and the people found themselves oppressed to an intolerable degree. The line had not yet been drawn between the prerogatives of the crown and the rights of the people; both remained in the undefined state of prescription and tradition. In all the Northern nations, great councils had been attached to their monarchies from the early period when they emerged from the forests of Germany; and the ruling chief, combined with his council, offers us an image of government in one of its rudest forms. The destruction of the Anglo-Saxon nobility, in their revolts against William, had deprived the country of the actual members of the ancient Wittenagemotes, but did not put an end to the institution itself. The Norman barons held themselves to be as independent as the Saxon chiefs, and they surrounded their sovereign in the national council, after the Conquest, in the same manner as before.

Notwithstanding this, the royal privileges, being still undefined, were often stretched into unlimited use, varying in their extent according to the ambition and arbitrary spirit of the reigning prince. A wise monarch will never push his prerogative to extremes that may provoke his people to question its justice. Weaker princes, on the contrary, from a childish love of all the external marks of power, are fond of ob-

truding their authority on every occasion, and thus perpetually hazard their prerogatives by abusing them. King John, the successor of Richard the Lion-hearted, was a sovereign of this character, and, by a series of obstinate attempts to rule by his arbitrary will, instead of by law and justice, he brought the power of the crown into direct collision with the nobility, which then constituted the most efficient part of the nation. To this collision is to be traced the origin of the celebrated Magna Charta, or the Great Charter, famous in modern history, as the basis on which are founded the liberties of the English nation.

The reign of John had already been marked by a succession of misfortunes and disgraces, originating in the vices and imbecility of the sovereign. His conduct toward his brother Richard was ungrateful and perfidious, and he displayed all the treachery of a tortuous ambition, without any of the talents which have sometimes attended it. By the murder of Prince Arthur he lost Normandy; and as messenger after messenger announced to him the capture of his castles and towns by Philip of France, he only exclaimed, with a coarse laugh, "Let him take them, I will get them back some time or other." By the loss of his French territories he obtained the opprobrious nickname of "Lackland." He next involved himself in a quarrel with the Pope, and, to escape from his difficulties, made a formal cession of his crown to that prelate, and consented to receive it back as a gift. This transaction caused such disgust to the nation, that it proved, in the end, one of the main causes of the overthrow of the papal power in England. The vices and defects of

John's character seemed destined to be the instruments of much ultimate good to his subjects.

The king, who could learn no wisdom from experience, became more violent in his measures to enforce obedience to his arbitrary will, in proportion as he found the temper of the people exasperated by his misconduct. At length he spurned all laws, in the pursuit of his revenge, and forced the barons upon extraordinary measures for their own protection and defence. On the 20th of November, 1214, they assembled at the abbey of St. Edmunds, under pretence of celebrating the festival of the patron saint, but with the real object of maturing a plan of future operations without awakening suspicion. Many secret conferences were held; the various liberties for which they were to contend were agreed upon and defined, and they determined to go in a body and demand them when the king should hold his court on the next Christmas. Before they separated, they advanced singly to the high altar, and swore an oath to withdraw their allegiance from the king in case he should resist their claims, and to levy war against him till he should grant them. On Christmas the barons had no opportunity to put their scheme in execution. John, who was holding his court at Worcester, having perhaps received intelligence of the design, suddenly left the place, rode to London, and shut himself up in the Temple. The confederates followed him in great numbers, and on the feast of Epiphany presented their demands. The king at first assumed an air of superiority, and insisted not only that they should recede from their claims, but that they should assure him, under hand and seal, that

they would never present them again. Two or three were intimidated and gave their consent, but all the rest obstinately refused.

John now attempted a temporizing policy, and put off the barons with a promise to satisfy them at the approaching Easter. In the interval he attempted to strengthen his hands by securing the clergy. He granted them various privileges, assumed the cross, and made a vow to go upon a crusade. Meantime the Pope, being solicited to interfere by both parties, took sides in favor of the king, annulled the confederacy of the barons, and pronounced an excommunication against all who should engage in any similar combination for the future. In Easter week, the barons assembled at Stamford, and with two thousand knights, their esquires and followers, marched to Brackley. The king was at Oxford, and commissioned the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Earls of Pembroke and Warenne to go and ascertain their demands. They brought him back a paper containing the same articles as before. As soon as it was read, he exclaimed, "They might as well demand my crown! Do they think I will grant them liberties which will make me a slave?"

Hostilities soon followed. The barons proclaimed themselves "the army of God and his Holy Church," and elected Robert Fitz-Walter for their commander. They immediately invested Northampton, a strong place garrisoned by a body of foreigners. After a fortnight's siege, they were obliged to abandon the enterprise for want of military engines. At Bedford they were more fortunate; the governor opened the gates, and, at the moment of taking possession of the town, an invi-

tation to proceed thither was received from some of the principal citizens of London. They marched immediately to the capital, without halting, and reached the city early on the morning of the 24th of May. The day being Sunday, the inhabitants were in the churches, and the gates stood open. No resistance was offered, and the army of the confederates took possession of London. Elated with this important success, they sent letters to the barons and knights who had not yet declared themselves, stating their objects and resources, and their determination to treat as enemies all who did not join the army of God and of the Holy Church. This produced the most decisive effect.

Disheartened by these occurrences, John found himself compelled to submit. He assumed an air of cheerfulness, and declared his willingness to settle with the barons on amicable terms. He desired them to name a day and a place for a conference, where the terms of a treaty might be discussed. They fixed upon a spot called Runnimede, or Running-Mead, a meadow between Staines and Windsor. At this place, ever memorable in the history of English liberties, both parties met on the 15th of June, 1215. The barons assembled in such numbers that they seemed to comprise the whole nobility of England. The parties took their separate stations. On the one side sat the king, accompanied by eight bishops, the Pope's envoy, Pandulf, and fifteen gentlemen who attended as his confidential advisers, although the disaffection of some of them was notorious. On the other side stood the great body of the barons, drawn up in imposing array, with Fitz-Walter at their head. After a long discussion, the

demands of the barons were formally written down, and Magna Charta was signed.

A condensed view of this important instrument will show the state of the government under the previous reigns. The royal sway must have been arbitrary in the extreme, when the subjects were driven to extort by force of arms political rights of the following character.

“No taxation shall be imposed but by parliament, except in three specified cases, and in these the amount shall be reasonable.

“No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or dispossessed of his land, or outlawed, or banished, or in any way destroyed or oppressed by the crown, except by the legal judgment of his peers, or the law of the land.

“The king shall not sell justice, nor deny nor delay right or justice to any one.

“No bailiff shall arrest or imprison any man upon a mere complaint, without faithful witnesses to substantiate it.

“The city of London, and all other cities, burghs, and towns, shall have all their ancient liberties and free customs.

“No man shall be compelled to do more military service than he owes.

“No widow shall be compelled to marry, so long as she wishes to live without a husband; provided she gives surety that she will not marry without the king's consent, if she holds her lands of him, or the consent of the lord, if she holds lands of any.

“No goods shall be distrained while the debtor is able to pay.

“Lands shall not be seized for debt, if there are goods sufficient.

“There shall be one measure and one weight throughout the kingdom.

“Merchants may safely visit England, travel through the country to buy and sell, according to the ancient customs, and return home.

“Any Englishman may leave the realm and return, preserving his allegiance.

“Every widow shall have her jointure and dower.

“The courts of common pleas shall not follow the king, but shall be held in some certain place. Courts of assize shall be held four times a year.”

A general joy spread through the kingdom on the publication of the Great Charter. “England,” says Matthew Paris, “seemed delivered from an Egyptian yoke, and the people believed that the king’s stony heart was softened.” But the Charter, although equitable, conducive to the welfare of the nation, and perfectly compatible with every dignified and useful prerogative of the sovereign, was unpalatable to John, because it restricted his capricious humors and arbitrary will. Resentment and mortification soon exasperated him into extravagances of behaviour which bordered upon insanity. He began to execrate his mother and the day of his birth. He would gnash his teeth, stare wildly about him, seize clubs and sticks of wood, gnaw them, break them in pieces, and practise other unaccountable freaks. On the night which followed the signature of the Charter, he sent private letters to all the governors of his castles, who were foreigners, ordering them to provision their fortresses,

make arrows, and prepare their military engines; but privately and cautiously, that the barons might not discover it.

The report of these proceedings reached the barons, and they inquired of the king what he meant. He made oath that he designed no hostility; and the rude horse-laugh, with which he accompanied his asseverations, seemed more like folly than malice. Half appeased, and half mistrusting, they withdrew; and the king, suddenly, on the following day, at dawn, set off for the Isle of Wight, where he hid himself, brooding over plans of revenge. Here he passed three months among the fishermen and sailors, amusing himself with piratical attacks upon the vessels which approached the coast. His subjects, in the mean time, were wholly ignorant what had become of him, and debated whether he had turned fisherman or freebooter. One part of his employment, in this concealment, was to invite needy adventurers from the continent to come over to him. He also sent ambassadors to Rome to solicit the papal condemnation of the Charter. The Pope annulled the Charter, suspended the Archbishop of Canterbury, and excommunicated the barons.

John at length emerged from his concealment, and proceeded to Dover to meet his auxiliaries, who, enticed by the hope of large donations and confiscations, had come over in great numbers from France and the Netherlands, many of them bringing their families, as if sure of settling in England. At the head of this army of mercenaries, John advanced to Nottingham, plundering, on his march, the baronial possessions, and detaching parties in all directions to ravage the country.

The barons were now in a most critical situation, under the ban of the Pope, and with an army of desperadoes arrayed against them. But, with invincible courage, they determined to defend to the last extremity a cause which concerned not only the liberties of England, but their own lives and fortunes. They agreed to choose Louis, the son of the king of France, for their king, and, with his assistance, to maintain the contest against John. The papal legate forbade Louis to enter England ; but the offer of a crown was too tempting, and he sailed from Calais with six hundred and eighty ships well furnished with troops. He landed at the Isle of Thanet, took Rochester, and marched to London, where the barons received him with acclamations. Nearly all the southern counties of England were soon reduced, and John's forces maintained themselves in the North, where they were distressed by an invasion of the Scots. The country now suffered all the desolations of a civil war, when it was happily released from its calamities by the death of the king. Having made an intemperate meal of peaches and new ale, he fell into a dysentery, of which he died at Newark, on the 19th of October, 1216.

His successor, Henry the Third, confirmed the Great Charter, and it has remained, ever since, the foundation-stone of the English Constitution.

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT.

*Guy Fawkes and his Associates.*

ONE of the most extraordinary events in the history of England is that commonly known by the name of the Gunpowder Treason and Plot; in which case the king and parliament of England had a narrow escape, by a singular accident, from a most diabolical scheme of destruction. This plot was the work of a small number of fanatical Roman Catholics, who undertook to wreak their revenge on James the First and his government for not showing indulgence to their religion. The records of history afford few instances of more daring and wanton depravity.

The Catholics had expected great favor and indulgence on the accession of James the First, he being the

son of Mary, queen of Scots, who was a rigid Romanist, and having himself shown some partiality to that religion in his youth. But they soon discovered their mistake, and were at once surprised and enraged to find James on all occasions expressing his resolution of strictly executing the laws enacted against them, and of persevering in the policy of his predecessor. These declarations determined them upon desperate measures, and they at length formed a plan to destroy the king and both houses of parliament at a blow. The scheme was first broached by Robert Catesby, a gentleman of an ancient family in England, who conceived that a train of gunpowder might be so placed under the parliament-house as to blow up the king and all the members at once. He suggested the subject to Thomas Percy, a descendant of the illustrious house of Northumberland, who approved the project, and readily joined in it. Thomas Winter was next intrusted with the dreadful secret ; and he went over to Flanders in quest of Guy Fawkes, an officer in the Spanish service, with whose zeal and courage the conspirators were thoroughly acquainted. When they enlisted any new zealot into their plot, the more firmly to bind him to secrecy, they always put him upon oath, employing the Eucharist, the most sacred rite of religion, to enforce it. Every tender feeling, and all emotions of pity, were banished from their breasts ; and Desmond and Garnet, two Jesuits, superiors of the order, absolved their consciences from every scruple.

How horrid soever the contrivance might appear, yet every member of the league seemed faithful and secret ; and about two months before the sitting of parliament,

in 1605, they hired a house in Percy's name, adjoining that in which the parliament were to assemble. Their first intention was to cut a passage under the parliament-house, from that which they occupied, and they set themselves laboriously to the task ; but when they had pierced the wall, which was three yards in thickness, they were surprised to find that the parliament-house was vaulted underneath, and that a magazine of coals was usually kept there. From their disappointment on this account they were soon relieved by information, that the coals were then selling off, and that, after their removal, the vault would be let to the highest bidder. They therefore seized the opportunity of hiring the place, and bought the remaining quantity of coals then stored in it. The next thing was to carry thither thirty-six barrels of gunpowder, which had been purchased in Holland ; and the whole was covered with the coals, and with fagots brought for that purpose. Then the doors of the cellar were boldly flung open, and everybody was admitted, as if it contained nothing dangerous.

Confident of success, they now began to settle the remaining part of their project. The king, the queen, and Prince Henry, the king's eldest son, were all expected to be present at the opening of the parliament. The king's second son, by reason of his tender age, would be absent, and it was resolved that Percy should seize or assassinate him. The Princess Elizabeth, likewise a child, was kept at Lord Harrington's house in Warwickshire, and Sir Everard Digby was to seize her, and immediately proclaim her queen.

The 5th of November, the day for the sitting of parliament, now approached. Never was treason more secret, or ruin, apparently, more inevitable; the hour was expected with impatience, and the conspirators gloried in their anticipated triumph. The dreadful secret, though communicated to above twenty persons, had been religiously kept during the space of nearly a year and a half; but, when all the motives of piety and justice were too weak, a feeling of private friendship saved the kingdom. Sir Henry Percy, one of the conspirators, conceived the design of saving the life of Lord Monteagle, his intimate friend and companion, who was also of the same religion with himself. About ten days before the meeting of parliament, this nobleman, upon his return to town, received a letter from a person unknown, and delivered by one who fled as soon as he had done his message. The letter was to this effect: "My Lord, stay away from this parliament; for God and man have concurred to punish the wickedness of the times. And think not slightly of this advertisement, but retire yourself into your country, where you may expect the event in safety. For, though there be no appearance of any stir, yet I say they will receive a terrible blow this parliament, and yet they shall not see who hurts them. This counsel is not to be contemned, because it may do you good, and can do you no harm; for the danger is past as soon as you have burned the letter."

The contents of this mysterious letter surprised the nobleman to whom it was addressed; and though inclined to think it a foolish attempt to frighten and ridicule him, yet he judged it safest to carry it to Lord

Salisbury, secretary of state. Lord Salisbury, too, was inclined to give little attention to it, yet he thought proper to lay it before the king in council. None of the latter were able to make any thing of it, although it appeared serious and alarming. In the universal agitation between doubt and apprehension, the king was the first who penetrated the meaning of this dark epistle. He concluded that some sudden danger was preparing by gunpowder; and it was thought advisable to inspect all the vaults below the houses of parliament. This care belonged to the Earl of Suffolk, lord chamberlain, who purposely delayed the search till the day before the meeting of parliament. He remarked those great piles of fagots which lay in the vault under the House of Peers; and he cast his eye upon Fawkes, who stood in a dark corner, and who passed himself off as Percy's servant. That daring, determined courage, for which he had long been noted, was fully painted in his countenance, and struck the lord chamberlain with strong suspicion. The great quantity of fuel, also, kept there for the use of a person who seldom visited London, did not pass unnoticed; and he resolved to make a more exact scrutiny. About midnight, therefore, Sir Thomas Knevet, a justice of the peace, was sent with proper attendants, and, just at the entrance of the vault, he seized a man preparing for the terrible enterprise, dressed in a cloak and boots, and with a dark lantern in his hand. This was no other than Guy Fawkes, who had just disposed every part of the train for setting it on fire the next morning, the matches and other combustibles being found in his pockets. The whole of the design was now discover-

ed ; but the atrociousness of his guilt, and despair of pardon, inspiring him with resolution, he told the officers of justice, with an undaunted air, that, had he blown them and himself up together, he had been happy. Before the council, he displayed the same intrepid firmness, mixed even with scorn and disdain ; refusing to discover his associates, and showing no concern but for the failure of his enterprise. But his bold spirit was at length subdued ; having been confined to the Tower for two or three days, and the rack just shown him, his courage, fatigued with so long an effort, at last failed him, and he made a full discovery of all his accomplices.

Catesby, Percy, and the conspirators who were in London, hearing that Fawkes was arrested, fled with all speed to Warwickshire, where Sir Everard Digby, relying on the success of the plot, was already in arms in order to seize the Princess Elizabeth. But the country soon took the alarm, and wherever the insurgents turned they found a force ready to oppose them. In this exigency, beset on all sides, they resolved, to the number of about eighty persons, to fly no farther, but to make a stand at a house in Warwickshire ; to defend it to the last, and sell their lives as dearly as possible. But even this miserable consolation was denied them ; a spark of fire happening to fall among some gunpowder that was laid to dry, it exploded, and so maimed the principal conspirators that the survivors resolved to open the gate and sally out against the multitude that surrounded the house. Some were instantly cut to pieces ; Catesby, Percy, and Winter, standing back to back, fought long and desperately,

fill in the end the two first fell covered with wounds, and Winter was taken alive. Those that survived the slaughter were tried and convicted ; several perished by the hands of the executioner ; while others experienced the king's mercy. The Jesuits Garnet and Oldcorn, who were privy to the plot, suffered with the rest ; and, notwithstanding the enormity of their crime, Garnet was considered by his party as a martyr, and miracles were said to have been wrought by his blood.

Such was the end of a conspiracy that brought ruin on its contrivers, and only disgraced the religion it was intended to establish. Yet it is remarkable, that, before this audacious attempt, the conspirators had always borne a fair reputation. Catesby was noted for his amiable disposition, and Digby was as highly esteemed for honor and integrity as any man in England. Such are the lamentable effects of superstition and religious bigotry in extinguishing all human sympathies, and perverting every gentle and honorable feeling that can ennoble mankind.



OLIVER CROMWELL AND HIS TIMES.



Escape of Charles the Second, after the battle of Worcester.

OLIVER CROMWELL is the most remarkable person in English history. From an obscure origin he raised himself to sovereign power ; and, although he refused the title of King, he reigned over Great Britain with absolute sway, and became the most powerful sovereign that ever guided the destinies of that nation. No characters fill so brilliant a page in history, as those who have founded monarchies on the ruins of republican institutions. Mankind, indeed, profess more esteem for patriots, who, like Washington, after leading their countrymen to victory, voluntarily abdicate that authority which might have been exerted for their own personal aggrandizement ; yet the glory of these great men, although purer, is not of so seductive and daz-

zling a kind as that of the successful conqueror who places a crown upon his head.

Cromwell was the son of a private gentleman of Huntingdon, and was born at that place on the 25th of April, 1599. He received an ordinary education, and in the early part of his life gave no indication whatever of the possession of any great or shining qualities. His manners were rude and boisterous, his acquirements small, and his morals licentious; unless, indeed, the royalists, in their enmity, have blackened his character by falsehoods. Suddenly he reformed, married, settled in his native town, and led a sober and religious life. His enemies have called this hypocrisy, but it does not appear that any thing was to be gained by such an assumed character. Cromwell was doubtless a sincere enthusiast. He removed to the Isle of Ely, abandoned the Church of England, attached himself to the Puritans, and manifested increased zeal for religion. As a proof of the sincerity of his conversion, he made restitution to persons of whom he had won money by gaming. He was a member of the parliaments of 1625 and 1628; but his worldly affairs beginning to decline, he took a farm near St. Ives, which he occupied five years. His affairs growing still worse, he formed a resolution, in 1637, of emigrating to New England in company with John Hampden; which would have been carried into effect, had not the ship in which he was about to embark for Boston been detained. Charles the First issued a proclamation forbidding new settlers to sail for America; little did he imagine that he was compelling a man to remain in the kingdom, who was destined to wrest the sceptre from his hand and bring him to the scaffold.

The tyranny of Charles had alienated the feelings of his subjects. Believing in the divine right of kings, and the almost unlimited extent of the royal authority, he set no bounds to his arbitrary measures. Dissenters from the established church were persecuted. To enjoy liberty of conscience, the Puritans had fled across the Atlantic and sought an asylum on the wild New England shores. Freedom of speech against the tyrannical misdoings of Charles and his minions was punished by fines, the pillory, cropping the ears, &c. The high spirit of the English nation could not endure this long. Murmurs of discontent soon grew into clamorous indignation, and at length a manly resistance was opposed to the arbitrary usurpations of the crown. John Hampden refused to pay the illegal assessment of ship-money, and was prosecuted in the Court of Exchequer. The judges pronounced against him, but all England was aroused by the proceeding, and the result was a popular victory. The people saw that their liberties were menaced.

Parliament took strong ground in favor of popular rights. The king, finding them intractable, attempted to rule without them, but this only hastened the crisis. Cromwell was returned a member of the parliament which met in 1640, and which, from the length of time it continued, obtained the name of the Long Parliament. Here opportunities presented themselves of displaying his abilities. He studied the characters of parties and individuals, and obtained that perfect knowledge of the state and the prospect of affairs which gave him shortly afterward so remarkable an ascendancy. The king and parliament could no longer keep terms with each other. Charles set up his standard at Oxford, and

the civil war began. The two parties nicknamed each other "Cavaliers" and "Round-heads," the latter phrase being applied to the Puritans from their custom of cropping their hair.

Cromwell entered with great zeal into the rebellion. When the parliament first decided to levy forces against the king, he raised by his own exertions a troop of horse, and took the command by a commission from the Earl of Essex, general-in-chief of the parliamentary armies. The military talents, which he had never dreamed of possessing, quickly began to appear. He undertook many spirited and successful enterprises on his own responsibility. He was made a colonel, and his regiment soon became the best in the service. His method of discipline may be understood from one particular. To try the courage and presence of mind of his recruits, he placed a dozen troopers in ambuscade, who suddenly rushed upon them. About twenty of the recruits galloped off the field at full speed. These he cashiered, and enlisted bolder men in their place. By such means his ranks were purged of all cowards.

By his important services, Cromwell soon attracted general notice and acquired the confidence of parliament. He was appointed lieutenant-general of cavalry, and at the battle of Marston Moor, in 1644, turned the fortune of the day, and caused the first great defeat of the royalists. He again distinguished himself at the battle of Newbury; and, the eyes of the whole nation being now turned upon him, he was called by his party the Saviour of the Nation. The opponents of the king were divided into several parties. Cromwell

was a member of the sect denominated "Independents." By the management of this party, an act called "the Self-denying Ordinance" was sanctioned by the parliament, which provided that no member of that body should hold any military command. By this crafty manœuvre, many officers who stood in the way of Cromwell's elevation were excluded; while Cromwell himself, from his extraordinary influence over the parliament, the people, and the soldiery, was specially exempted from the operation of the act. The army was under the command of Fairfax, a brave and honest man, but no match for the superior ability, craft, and ambition of Cromwell, who was now promoted to the rank of lieutenant-general in the army. By his skill and bravery, the decisive battle of Naseby was gained in June, 1645. For his services in this exploit, and others which immediately followed, parliament voted him £ 2500 a year. Through his exertions, the royalists were defeated in every quarter, and the king fled to Scotland.

Cromwell's great fame and overgrown influence now began to excite the jealousy of the parliament, although he continued to profess the most profound submission to their authority. They proposed to reduce the army, designing to disband his corps; but he had the address to counteract this scheme, and turned the plot to his own advantage, by preserving himself in the command and getting rid of many rivals and enemies. By his management, the king was made prisoner and carried to the head-quarters of the army; and from this time till the trial and execution of Charles, Cromwell practised a most extraordinary and successful scheme

of policy, deceiving and overreaching the king, the parliament, and the army.

The second civil war, in which the Scots joined the royalists, called Cromwell again into the field. We have no room to specify his various successes. Charles the First, after escaping, was again captured, put on trial before the parliament, and condemned to die. Cromwell, with forty members of the Lower House, signed the death-warrant, and the king was beheaded in front of his own palace of Whitehall, on the 30th of January, 1649.

Cromwell, as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, invaded that country in 1649. He conquered the island, and returned the next year. The Scots now threatened an invasion of England in favor of Charles the Second. Cromwell marched into that country with twenty thousand troops, gave the Scots a signal overthrow at the decisive battle of Dunbar, captured Edinburgh, and obliged the young king to make a desperate attempt to retrieve his affairs in England. Cromwell marched in pursuit of the royal army, and at the battle of Worcester, on the 3d of September, 1651, obtained a victory which he called his *crowning mercy*. The royalists were defeated and utterly dispersed, and Cromwell made his triumphal entry into London, with all the pomp of a conqueror and deliverer. The measure of his glory was now full and his influence supreme; without an equal or a competitor, the path opened to his ambition was boundless.

The parliament had now become unpopular, yet they found pretexts for delaying their dissolution. Cromwell resolved upon the bold expedient of dis-

solving them by force; and this, the most extraordinary act of his life, was immediately accomplished. With a guard of three hundred men, he proceeded to the parliament-house, where, leaving his soldiers at the door, he entered and took his seat. After listening to the debates a short time, he started up, bade the speaker leave the chair, and told the members they had sat long enough unless they did more good. "Come, come!" said he, "I will put an end to your prating. You are no parliament: I say you are no parliament." Then, stamping with his foot, he ordered them for shame to "Be gone and give place to honest men." The soldiers, at this signal, entered the house. Cromwell pointed at the mace, the symbol of authority, which always lay on the table in front of the speaker, and exclaimed, "Take away that bawble!" At the same time an officer took the speaker by the arm and led him down from his seat. Cromwell, again addressing the members, said, "It is you that forced me to this; for I have besought the Lord, night and day, that he would rather slay me than put me upon the doing of this work." He then seized the papers, turned the members out of the house, and locked the doors. Such was the end of the Long Parliament, on the 19th of April, 1653.

Cromwell was now supreme ruler of England, and on the 16th of December, 1653, formally assumed the title of Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland. But to keep up the external form of a popular government, he convened a parliament, which, from the name of one of its members, became known as "Barebone's Parliament." This body,

however, was soon thrown aside, and the Protector reigned alone. His administration placed England in the first rank of Christian powers. He taught every nation to value her friendship and to dread her enmity. He rebuked the haughty pride of the French monarch, and foiled the veteran craft of Mazarin. He humbled Spain on the land, and Holland on the sea, arrested the victorious arms of Sweden, and the persecuting fires of Rome. His administration was glorious; but with no vulgar glory. It was not one of those periods of overstrained and convulsive exertion, such as we have witnessed in our own day, necessarily producing debility and languor; its energy was natural, healthful, and temperate. No sovereign ever carried to the throne so large a portion of the best popular feeling, so strong a sympathy with the interests of the people. Cromwell, even by the confession of his enemies, exhibited in his demeanour the simple and natural nobleness of a man neither ashamed of his origin nor vain of his elevation. He behaved like one who had found his proper place in society, and felt secure that he was competent to fill it.

Threats of assassination by the royalists compelled him to take strict precautions for his safety. He wore armor under his clothes, and carried loaded pistols. Many conspiracies against him were detected by that good fortune which always marked his career, and he died peaceably in his bed, on the 3d of September, 1658, the anniversary of his two great victories of Dunbar and Worcester. In the language of Byron,

“ His day of double victory and death

Beheld him win two realms, and, happier, yield his breath.”

Cromwell, in military genius, must be allowed to be the greatest man that the British empire has ever produced. Marlborough and Wellington defeated more enemies, and conducted campaigns on a larger scale; but they were trained in the best military schools, and commanded armies ready disciplined to their hands. Cromwell passed his youth and the prime of his manhood in peaceful occupations and studies. He never looked on war till he was more than forty years old. He was compelled first to teach himself the art of war, and then to teach it to his troops. Out of raw levies he created an army, the bravest and the best disciplined, the most orderly in peace and the most terrible in war, that Europe had seen; an army, which, in all the furious animosity of civil strife, knew nothing akin to the horrors of Magdeburg and St. Sebastian. He called this body into existence, and led it to conquest. He never fought a battle without gaining a victory, and never gained a victory without utterly ruining his opponent. Yet his triumphs were not the highest glory of his military system. The respect which his troops paid to property, their attachment to the laws and religion of their country, their submission to the civil power, their temperance, their intelligence, and their industry are without a parallel.

The charges of hypocrisy and fanaticism have been made against Cromwell. As to the former, it is incumbent upon us to inquire how far a man has deceived himself, before we accuse him of deceiving others. And as to his fanaticism, it never urged him upon impracticable undertakings, nor confused his perceptions of the public good. He did not, like Napole-

on, under the influence of a presumptuous fatalism, risk his fame and his power in a frantic contest against the principles of human nature, and the laws of the physical world, against the rage of winter, and the liberty of the seas. Cromwell could command his passions, and pursue, as a first object, the happiness of the people under his care ; a praise which will never be bestowed on the Conqueror of Europe. Never was any ruler so manifestly born for sovereignty. The cup of prosperity, which has intoxicated almost all others, sobered him. Rapidly as his fortunes grew, his mind expanded more rapidly still. Insignificant as a private citizen, he was a great general, and a still greater sovereign. Easy in manners, even to familiarity, where his own dignity was concerned, he was punctilious only for his country. His own character he left to take care of itself, and to be defended by his victories in war, and his reforms in peace. He rendered the administration of justice uniform throughout the realm, reformed the representative system in a most judicious manner, and went down to the grave in the fulness of his power and fame.

Cromwell left two sons, the elder of whom, Richard, succeeded him in the Protectorate. Had he possessed but a moderate degree of capacity and firmness, the Commonwealth of England would have continued to this day ; and the whole history of Europe, and of North America, perhaps, would have been materially different. But the imbecile Richard Cromwell, daunted by the first shadow of a difficulty, dropped from his feeble hands the reins of government, and, in the per-

plexities which followed, monarchy was restored in the person of Charles the Second.

That prince escaped from the battle of Worcester as soon as he saw that the day was lost. With a small company of attendants, he eluded the pursuit of the enemy's cavalry by the fleetness of his horse, and struck off from the high road without well knowing which way to go. The country was hostile, and it was evident that the most diligent search would be made for him. He therefore disguised himself in the dress of a countryman, cropped his hair close, in the manner of the Puritans, and set out on foot, with a single companion, designing to proceed to London. They soon espied a troop of three thousand of Cromwell's cavalry galloping toward them, on which they fled into an adjoining wood, where they remained the whole day without food or drink, and drenched with a heavy rain. Here Charles altered his design, and resolved to cross the Severn into Wales, from which quarter he hoped to make his escape into France. Passing by a mill in the night, they heard a great noise of people talking, and were hailed by the miller. They answered, "Neighbours going home." "If you are neighbours, well," answered the miller; "but if not, I will knock you down." Upon this they ran down a narrow, dirty lane, and the miller with others at their heels, crying, "Rogues! rogues!" By running fast, and skulking behind hedges, they got away from their pursuers, and reached the house of a royalist named Wolfe, who had hiding-holes for priests on his premises. This man did not dare lodge the prince in one of these recesses, but secreted him in his barn under

the corn and hay. Charles now thought it best to retrace his steps, and accordingly returned as far as the house of a man named Penderell. Here it was judged unsafe for him either to remain in the house or take refuge in the woods, as the republican troops were scouring the country in every quarter. There was a large oak tree standing in an open situation in the neighbourhood, which had been lopped a few years previous, and was covered with thick foliage which could not be seen through. This seemed to offer the only safe asylum, and Charles, with one companion, ascended the tree in the night, with some bread, cheese, and small beer, and stayed there all the following day, during which time they saw great numbers of soldiers going up and down, and searching the woods for fugitives. This tree afterwards became famous as the "Royal Oak," which, the old Primer informs us, in language that has puzzled many a juvenile American scantily acquainted with the details of English history,

" was the tree
That saved his Royal Majesty."

Issuing from the Royal Oak the following night, Charles pursued his course. The reader may be curious to know how the king of England was dressed. With all the gravity of history, we are told, he was in "a very greasy old hat with the brim turned up, no lining, nor hat-band. A green cloth jump-coat, thread-bare, the threads being white; breeches of the same, with long knees down to the garters. An old greasy leather doublet, a pair of white flannel stockings, their tops cut off to prevent discovery, and over them a pair

of old green yarn stockings, all worn and darned at the knees, and their feet cut off. An old coarse shirt, torn and patched at the neck and wrists, and his shoes all cut and slashed." In this disguise he was enabled to skulk from place to place, till he procured a horse, and once more shifted his attire. Near Bentley, the horse cast a shoe, and Charles took him to a blacksmith. As he was holding up the horse's foot, he asked the smith, "What news?" He replied, that the Scots were beaten, but "the rogue Charles Stuart was not taken." The prince rejoined, that, "if that rogue were taken, he deserved to be hanged more than all the rest, for bringing in the Scots." The smith told him he "spake like an honest man," and with this comfort Charles took leave of the blacksmith.

At Stratford-upon-Avon, he fell in with a troop of horse of the enemy, but escaped recognition. At a house in Cirencester, while eating his breakfast, he found himself in company with a man who had known him perfectly well. Charles questioned him very closely, and the man gave an accurate description of him, with the exception of one particular. "He is," said he, "full three fingers taller than you." Encountering adventures of this kind, and hair-breadth escapes almost without number, he at length reached the sea-coast at Shoreham in Sussex, where some persons in his confidence provided a small vessel, in which he made his escape across the Channel to France. The last of these adventures is amusing. While sitting upon the beach, in company with a fisherman who was in the secret, another fisherman came strolling toward them, smoking his pipe. On approaching close to Charles,

he peered in his face with a stare of rude curiosity. The prince's confidant trembled in fear of a discovery. "Come away," he exclaimed, "do n't trouble the gentleman with your tobacco-smoke." "Pugh!" replied the other, "*'A cat may look upon a king.'*"

THE PLAGUE IN LONDON.

ENGLAND has experienced several visitations of this terrible disease. About the middle of the fourteenth century, that country suffered in common with all Europe; the disorder being then called the Black Death. Two centuries afterward, the same general calamity occurred. In the seventeenth century, the plague again made great ravages there, appearing at four different times. The last of these visits was the most terrible, and is known by the name of the Great Plague. It appears to have been introduced from Holland, where it had swept off great multitudes in the years 1663 and 1664.

The first cases that attracted notice occurred in the outskirts of London, in December, 1664. These excited alarm, and directed the attention of the public to the weekly variation in the bills of mortality. On the one hand, the cool temperature of the air and the frequent changes in the weather were hailed as favorable circumstances; on the other, it could not be concealed, that the number of deaths, from whatever cause it arose, was continually on the advance. In this state of suspense, alternately agitated by their hopes and

fears, men looked to the result with the most intense anxiety ; and at length, about the end of May, under the influence of a warmer sun, and with the aid of a close and stagnant atmosphere, the evil burst forth in all its terrors. From the centre of St. Giles's, the infection spread with rapidity over the adjacent parishes, threatened the court at Whitehall, and, in defiance of every precaution, stole its way into the heart of the city. A general panic ensued ; the nobility and gentry were the first to flee ; the royal family followed ; and then all who valued their personal safety more than the considerations of home and interest, prepared to imitate their example. For some weeks, the tide of emigration flowed from every outlet towards the country ; it was checked at first by the refusal of the Lord Mayor to grant certificates of health, and by the opposition of the neighbouring townships, which rose in their own defence and formed a barrier round the devoted city.

The absence of the fugitives, and the consequent cessation of trade, and the breaking up of establishments, served to aggravate the calamity. It was calculated that forty thousand servants had been left without a home ; and the number of artisans and laborers thrown out of employment was still more considerable. It is true that the charity of the opulent seemed to keep pace with the progress of distress. The king subscribed the weekly sum of a thousand pounds ; the city, six hundred. The queen dowager, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Earl of Craven, and the Lord Mayor, distinguished themselves by the amount of their benefactions ; and the magistrates were careful to in-

sure a constant supply of provisions in the markets. Yet the families that depended on casual relief for the means of subsistence were necessarily subjected to privations, which rendered them more liable to receive, and less able to subdue, the contagion. The mortality was at first confined to the lower classes, carrying off the children in a larger proportion than the adults, and the females, than the men. But, by the end of June, so rapid was the diffusion, so destructive were the ravages of the disease, that the civil authorities deemed it time to exercise the power with which they had been invested by an act of James the First, "for the charitable relief and ordering of persons infected with the plague." They divided the parishes into districts, and allotted to each district a competent number of officers, under the denominations of examiners, searchers, nurses, and watchmen. They ordered that the existence of the disease, wherever it might penetrate, should be made known to the public by a red cross, one foot in length, painted on the door, with the words, "Lord have mercy on us!" placed above it. From that moment the house was closed; all egress, for the space of one month, was inexorably refused; and the wretched inmates were doomed to remain under the same roof, communicating death to one another. Of these, many sunk under the horrors of their situation; many were rendered desperate. They eluded the vigilance, or corrupted the fidelity of the watchmen; and by their escape, instead of avoiding, served only to disseminate the contagion. Provision was also made for the speedy interment of the dead. In the daytime, officers were always on the watch to

withdraw from public view the bodies of those who expired in the streets. During the night, the tinkling of a bell, accompanied by the glare of links, announced the approach of the pest-cart, making its round to receive the victims of the last twenty-four hours. No coffins were prepared, no funeral service was read, no mourners were permitted to follow the remains of their relations or friends. The cart proceeded to the nearest cemetery, and shot its burden into the common grave, a deep and spacious pit, capable of holding some scores of bodies, and dug in the churchyard, or, when this was full, in the outskirts of the parish.

The disease generally manifested itself by the usual febrile symptoms of shivering, nausea, headache, and delirium. In some, these affections were so mild as to be taken for a slight and transient indisposition. The victim saw not, or would not see, the insidious approach of his foe ; he applied to his usual avocations, till a sudden faintness came on ; the *maculæ*, the fatal tokens, appeared on his breast, and within an hour life was extinct. But in most cases the pain and delirium left no room for doubt. On the third or fourth day, buboes or carbuncles arose ; if these could be made to suppurate, recovery might be anticipated ; if they resisted the efforts of nature and the skill of the physician, death was inevitable. The sufferings of the patients often threw them into paroxysms of frenzy. They burst the bands by which they were confined to their beds, they precipitated themselves from the windows, they ran naked into the streets and plunged into the river.

Men of the strongest minds were lost in amazement, when they contemplated this scene of woe and desolation; the weak and the credulous became the dupes of their own fears and imaginations. Tales the most improbable, and predictions the most terrific, were circulated. Numbers assembled at different cemeteries to behold the ghosts of the dead walk round the pit in which their bodies had been deposited; and crowds believed that they saw in the heavens a sword of flame, stretching from Westminster to the Tower. To add to their terrors, came the fanatics, who felt themselves inspired to act the part of prophets. One of these walked through the city, in a state of nudity, having on his head a pan of burning coals, and denouncing the judgment of God on the sinful inhabitants. Another, assuming the character of Jonah, proclaimed aloud, as he passed, "Yet forty days, and London shall be destroyed!" And a third might be met, sometimes by day, sometimes by night, advancing with a hurried step, and exclaiming with a deep and sepulchral voice, "Oh! the great and dreadful God!"

"One time," says Defoe, in his narrative of this terrible calamity, "seeing a crowd of people in the street, I joined with them to satisfy my curiosity, and found them all staring up into the air to see what a woman told them appeared plain to her, which was an angel clothed in white, with a fiery sword in his hand, waving or brandishing it over his head. She described every part of the figure to the life, showed them the motion and the form, and the poor people came into it so eagerly, and with so much readiness! 'Yes, I see it all plainly,' says one; 'there's the sword as plain as

can be !' Another saw the angel. One saw his very face, and cried out, 'What a glorious creature he was !' One saw one thing, and one another. I looked as earnestly as the rest, but, perhaps, not with so much willingness to be imposed upon ; and I said, indeed, that I could see but a white cloud, bright on one side by the shining of the sun on the other part. The woman endeavoured to show it me, but could not make me confess. She turned to me, called me a profane fellow and a scoffer ; told me that it was a time of God's anger, and dreadful judgments were approaching, and that despisers, such as I, should wonder and perish. The people about her seemed disgusted as well as she, and I found there was no persuading them that I did not laugh at them, and that I should be rather mobbed by them than be able to undeceive them. So I left them, and this appearance passed for as real as the blazing star itself." *

During the months of July and August, the weather was sultry, the heat more and more oppressive. The eastern parishes, which at first had been spared, became the chief seat of the pestilence ; and the more substantial citizens, who had hitherto escaped, suffered in common with their less opulent neighbours. In

* It is proper to inform the reader, that Defoe was a small child at the time of this event, and that his own share in the adventures which make his narrative of the plague so interesting is only invention. Yet he is allowed by every one to have described all the scenes exhibited by this terrible visitation with wonderful accuracy. — The "blazing star" was a comet which appeared about this time and increased the terror of the people.

many places the regulations of the magistrates could no longer be enforced. The nights did not suffice for the burial of the dead, who were now borne in coffins to their graves at all hours of the day ; and it was deemed inhuman to shut up the dwellings of the infected poor, whose families must have perished through want, had they not been permitted to go and seek relief. London presented a wide and heart-rending scene of misery and desolation. Rows of houses stood tenantless and open to the winds ; others, in almost equal numbers, exhibited the red cross flaming on the doors. The chief thoroughfares, so lately trodden by the feet of thousands, were overgrown with grass. The few individuals who ventured abroad walked in the middle of the street, and, when they met, turned to opposite sides, to avoid contact with each other. But, if the solitude and stillness of the streets impressed the mind with awe, there was something yet more appalling in the sounds which occasionally burst on the ear. At one moment were heard the ravings of delirium, or the wail of woe, from the infected dwellings ; at another, the merry song, or the loud and careless laugh, issuing from the wassailers at the tavern, or the inmates of the brothel. Men became so familiarized with the form, that they steeled their feelings against the terrors, of death. They waited each for his turn with the resignation of the Christian or the indifference of the Stoic. Some devoted themselves to exercises of piety, others sought relief in the riot of dissipation and the recklessness of despair.

September came ; the heat of the atmosphere began to abate, but, contrary to expectation, the mortality

increased. Formerly a hope of recovery might be indulged; now infection was the certain harbinger of death, which followed generally in the course of three days, often within the space of twenty-four hours. The privy council ordered an experiment to be tried, which was grounded on the practice of former times. To dissipate the pestilential miasm, fires of sea-coal, in the proportion of one fire to every twelve houses, were kindled in every street, court, and alley of London and Westminster. They were kept burning three days and nights, and were at last extinguished by a heavy and continuous fall of rain. The next bill exhibited a considerable reduction in the amount of deaths; and the survivors congratulated each other on the cheering prospect. But the cup was soon dashed from their lips, and in the following week, more than ten thousand victims, a number hitherto unknown, sunk under the augmented violence of the disease. Yet even now, when hope had yielded to despair, their deliverance was at hand. The high winds, which usually accompany the autumnal equinox, cooled and purified the air; the fever, though equally contagious, assumed a less malignant form; and its ravages were necessarily more confined, from the diminution of the population on which it had hitherto fed. The weekly burials successively decreased from thousands to hundreds; and in the beginning of December, seventy-three parishes were pronounced clear of the disease. The intelligence was hailed with joy by the emigrants, who returned in crowds to take possession of their homes, and resume their usual occupations. In February, the court was once more fix-

ed at Whitehall, and the nobility and gentry followed the footsteps of the sovereign. Though more than one hundred thousand individuals are said to have perished, yet in a short time the chasm in the population was no longer discernible.

THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON.

THE year which followed the calamity described in the preceding pages was distinguished by another great disaster in London. On the night of the 2d of September, 1666, a fire broke out in a bake-house in Pudding Lane, near Fish Street, one of the most crowded districts of the city. The spot was surrounded by wooden buildings with tarred roofs, and a long succession of warm and fair weather had dried these combustible materials to such a degree that they took fire with inconceivable rapidity. The shops and stores in the neighbourhood were filled with the most inflammable materials, and the conflagration quickly spread, and raged so furiously, that the inhabitants were panic-struck at the beginning, and stood amazed, without the power to use prompt and energetic means for checking the fire. Moreover, by some accident which is not explained, the pipes for conducting water from the New River were found empty, and the machinery for raising water from the Thames, being near the spot where the fire broke out, was soon burned. At the approach of day, the wind, which had sprung up from

the east, blew very strong, and hourly increased in violence. The fire now advanced with frightful velocity, leaping from roof to roof through the air, and fastening upon houses at a great distance. The Lord Mayor, who had it in his power, by acting with promptness and decision, to arrest the progress of the flames, exhibited nothing but timidity and irresolution. A party of sailors suggested to him the expedient of blowing up houses with gunpowder; the plan was approved, but that functionary thought himself obliged to wait till he could obtain the consent of the owner; and before this could be done the flames had anticipated him.

The ensuing night, "if night," says an eyewitness, "it could be called, which was light as day for ten miles round," presented a most magnificent, but appalling spectacle. Above ten thousand buildings were on fire at one moment, sending upward a pyramid of flame that could be seen for forty miles. The whole sky was in a bright glow, as if the grand cope of heaven were embraced in the conflagration. A column of flame a mile in diameter now moved with a terrific and irresistible march from east to west; and every blast of the furious wind scattered through the air innumerable flakes of fire, which, falling on inflammable substances, kindled new conflagrations. The roaring of the flames, which resembled thunder, the scorching heat, the lurid glare of the atmosphere, the crash of falling towers, steeples, and walls; the hurry and clamor of tumultuous crowds, and the shrieking of the distracted people, all combined to fill every breast with such astonishment and terror as have seldom been exhibited in the history of human calamities.

The consternation was augmented by reports that a conspiracy existed between the Dutch, then at war with England, and the papists and republicans, to burn the whole city. Men were said to have been arrested carrying with them fulminating powders; others to have been seen throwing fire-balls into the houses, as they stole along the streets. The French residents in London, to the number of twenty thousand, were said to have taken up arms, and commenced massacring every Englishman that came in their way. In the general confusion and fright, all these stories were believed, and the terror of the credulous inhabitants was raised to the highest point. The confusion everywhere became redoubled. All were mingled together in the greatest disorder; men laboring to extinguish the flames; citizens conveying away their families and goods; crowds flying from the imaginary massacre; other crowds in arms hastening to oppose the murderers; and mobs surrounding and ill-treating every stranger, foreigner, and reputed papist, who ventured into the streets.

The fire raged with the greatest fury during four days and nights. "The stones of Paul's," says Evelyn, "flew like grenadoes; the melted lead running down the streets in a stream, and the very pavements glowing with fiery redness, so as no horse nor man was able to tread on them. The air all about was so hot and inflamed, that, at the last, one was not able to approach it, so that they were forced to stand still and let the flames burn on, which they did for near two miles in length and one in breadth. The clouds also of smoke were dismal, and reached, upon compu-

tation, near fifty miles in length." The whole city was now threatened with destruction, and an attempt was made, when too late, to check the progress of the flames by blowing up houses. Large chasms were thus formed in the path of the rushing conflagration; but such was the fury of the wind, that the huge burning flakes were carried across the empty spaces and rendered all such attempts abortive. At length the wind began to subside, and, some very large openings having been made with gunpowder, the further advance of the conflagration was impeded, and it gradually died away, though several months elapsed before the flames were fully quenched.

Two thirds of London were in this manner reduced to ashes; thirteen thousand two hundred houses and eighty-nine churches were consumed; an immense population was driven into the fields, houseless, and in a state of utter destitution. In the suburbs of the city, more than two hundred thousand people were to be seen lying on the bare ground, or under sheds hastily erected. The government applied all possible means for the relief of these unfortunate people; but it may easily be imagined what an amount of loss and suffering existed beyond the power of public or private charity to mitigate. All sorts of opinions were current for a long while as to the cause of the fire. Many persons were apprehended on suspicion of incendiaryism; and one man, confessing the fact, was condemned and executed; but there is no doubt that he was insane and innocent. Not a few considered the calamity as a special visitation of the Almighty, and looked no further for its origin. Among other explanations of

this sort, was one put forth by certain wise characters, that it was designed as a signal rebuke of the Londoners for their gluttony, which was clearly proved by the fact that it began in *Pudding Lane* and ended in *Pie Corner*. The general prejudice against the papists, however, caused the fire to be ascribed to them by the greater part of the people; and on the monument erected to perpetuate the memory of this great calamity, which, according to the well-known lines of Pope,

“pointing to the skies,
Like a tall bully, lifts its head and *lies*,”

it was recorded, that “the burning of this Protestant city was begun and carried on by the treachery and malice of the Popish faction.” This assertion, although notoriously without a shadow of proof, was allowed to remain till within about ten years, when it was erased by public authority.

THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE.

THE early part of the last century was rendered famous by the number and magnitude of “bubbles,” a name given to extravagant and ruinous financial schemes, and tricks of speculation. The most celebrated of all these was the South Sea Bubble, which enriched for a moment vast multitudes of people in England, and then plunged them into hopeless ruin. Fraud, folly, and accident, all combined to pro-

duce this singular catastrophe. The original scheme was projected by Sir John Blunt, a man who was bred a scrivener, but who had the invention and boldness to start a financial project of most gigantic dimensions. This was no less than to discharge the national debt by the instrumentality of the South Sea Company, of which Blunt was a director. He had the cunning and plausibility to meet successfully all the objections of the government to the scheme, and a bill was passed by parliament, in 1720, authorizing the South Sea Company to assume all the public debt.

Blunt had taken the hint of his plan from the famous Mississippi Scheme formed by John Law, which, in the preceding year, had raised such a ferment in France, and entailed ruin upon many thousand families in that kingdom. In the project of Law there was something substantial. An exclusive trade to Louisiana promised some advantages, though the design was defeated by the frantic eagerness of the people. Law himself became the dupe of the French Regent, who transferred the burden of fifteen hundred millions of the king's debts to the shoulders of the subjects, while the projector was sacrificed as the scape-goat of the political iniquity. The South Sea Scheme promised no commercial advantage of any importance. It was buoyed up by nothing but the folly and rapacity of individuals, which became so blind and extravagant, that Blunt, with moderate talents, was able to impose upon the whole nation, and make tools of the other directors of the Company, to serve his own purposes and those of a few associates. When this projector found that the South Sea stock did not rise according to his

expectation, upon the passage of the bill, he circulated a report that Gibraltar and Port Mahon would be exchanged for some places in Peru, by which means the English trade to the South Sea would be protected and enlarged. This rumor, diffused by his emissaries, acted like a contagion. In five days the directors opened their books for a subscription of one million. Persons of all ranks crowded to the house in such numbers that the first subscription exceeded two millions of original stock. In a few days this advanced in such a manner that the subscriptions were sold for double the price of the first payment.

Without entering into a detail of the proceedings, or explaining the scandalous deceits that were practised to enhance the value of the stock and decoy the unwary, we shall only observe, that by the promise of prodigious dividends, and other dishonest arts, the price of the shares was raised from one hundred pounds to one thousand, and the whole nation became infected with the spirit of stock-jobbing to an astonishing degree. All distinctions of party, religion, sex, character, and circumstances were swallowed up in this universal concern, or in some such pecuniary project. Exchange Alley was filled with a strange concourse of statesmen and clergymen, churchmen and dissenters, whigs and tories, physicians, lawyers, tradesmen, and even with multitudes of females. All other professions and employments were utterly neglected, and the people's attention was wholly engrossed by this and other chimerical schemes. New companies started up every day, under the countenance of the prime nobility. The Prince of Wales was constituted governor of the

Welsh Copper Company ; the Duke of Chandos appeared at the head of the York Buildings Company ; the Duke of Bridgewater formed a third company, for building houses in London and Westminster. More than a hundred such schemes were projected and put in execution, to the ruin of many thousands of people. The sums proposed to be raised by these expedients amounted to three hundred millions sterling, which exceeded the value of all the lands in England. The nation was so intoxicated with the spirit of adventure, that people became a prey to the grossest delusion. An obscure projector, pretending to have formed a very advantageous scheme, which, however, he would not explain, published proposals for a subscription, in which he promised that in one month the particulars of his project should be disclosed. In the mean time he declared that every person paying two guineas should be entitled to a subscription for one hundred pounds, which would produce that sum yearly. In one forenoon this adventurer received a thousand of these subscriptions, and then absconded.

During the infatuation produced by this extravagant scheme, luxury, vice, and profligacy increased to an enormous degree of extravagance. The adventurers, intoxicated by their imaginary wealth, pampered themselves with the rarest dainties and the most expensive wines that could be imported ; they purchased the most sumptuous furniture, equipage, and apparel, though without taste or discernment ; they indulged their criminal passions to a most scandalous excess, and their discourse was the language of pride, insolence, and ridiculous ostentation.

The infatuation prevailed till the 8th of September, when the stock began to fall. Some of the adventurers then awoke from their delirium. The number of the sellers daily increased. On the 29th, the stock had sunk to one hundred and fifty ; several eminent goldsmiths and bankers, who had lent great sums upon it, were obliged to stop payment and abscond. The ebb of this portentous tide was so violent that it bore down every thing in its way, and an infinite number of families were overwhelmed with ruin. Public credit sustained a terrible shock, the nation was thrown into a dangerous ferment, and nothing was heard but the ravings of grief, disappointment, and despair. Some principal members of the ministry were deeply concerned in these fraudulent transactions ; when they saw the price of stock sinking daily, they employed all their influence with the bank to support the credit of the South Sea Company. That corporation agreed, though with reluctance, to subscribe to the stock of the Company. By this expedient the stock was raised, at first, and those who contrived it seized the opportunity to sell out. But the bankruptcy of the goldsmiths and of the Swordblade Company, from the fall of South Sea stock, occasioned such a run upon the bank that the money was paid away faster than it could be received from the subscription. Then the South Sea stock sunk again, and the directors of the bank, finding themselves in danger of being involved in that company's ruin, renounced their agreement.

The directors and officers of the South Sea Company were examined at the bar of the House of Commons. A bill was brought in, disabling them from enjoying

any office in that company, or in the East India Company, or in the Bank of England. Three brokers were likewise examined and made great discoveries. The treasurer of the South Sea Company, who had been intrusted with the secrets of the whole affair, thought proper to withdraw himself from the kingdom. A proclamation was issued to apprehend him, and another for preventing any of the directors from escaping.

The Lords, in the course of their examination, discovered that large portions of South Sea stock had been given to several persons in the administration and the House of Commons, for promoting the passage of the South Sea Act. The House immediately resolved that this practice was a notorious and most dangerous species of corruption; that the directors of the Company having ordered great quantities of their stock to be bought for the service of the Company when it stood at a very high rate, on pretence of keeping up the price of stock, and at the same time several of the directors and other officers having, in a clandestine manner, sold their own stock to the Company, such directors and officers were guilty of a notorious fraud and breach of trust. Many other resolutions were passed against this dishonest confederacy, in which, however, the innocent were confounded with the guilty. Sir John Blunt refusing to answer certain interrogatories, a violent debate arose about the manner in which he should be treated. Earl Stanhope, conceiving certain reflections to be aimed at himself, was seized with a transport of anger. He undertook to vindicate the ministry, and spoke with such vehemence as produced a violent headache, and the

following day he became lethargic, was seized with a suffocation, and expired.

The committee of inquiry found, that, before any subscription could be made, a fictitious stock of five hundred and seventy-four thousand pounds had been disposed of by the directors to facilitate the passing of the bill. The directors, in obedience to the order of the House, delivered inventories of their estates ; which were confiscated, by act of parliament, towards making good the damages sustained by the Company, after deducting a certain allowance for each according to his conduct and circumstances. The delinquents being thus punished by the forfeiture of their fortunes, the House turned their attention to the means of repairing the mischiefs which the scheme had produced. While this affair was in agitation, petitions from counties, cities, and boroughs, in all parts of the kingdom, were presented to the House, crying for justice against the villany of the directors. Pamphlets and papers were daily published on the same subject ; and thus the whole nation was wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement and indignation.



SCOTLAND.

WALLACE AND HIS TIMES.

WILLIAM WALLACE is the most heroic character in Scottish history. Yet his authentic biography can scarcely be traced. Like all popular favorites, he has suffered from the fictions with which fond tradition has adorned his fame and obscured his history. His actions have always been the prominent theme of his countrymen, and his memory still lives in their undiminished admiration. His actions led the way to the independence of his country, at a period when that independence was a rescue from tyranny and oppression, although in his own person he did not reap the reward of his great services.

Edward the First, of England, had assumed the Scottish crown by the right of conquest; and the administration of his officers was felt to be oppressive and insulting to the conquered people. Scotland has at all times had a high national feeling, and its mountain chiefs have been distinguished for their habits of independence. No country was less likely, in the thirteenth century, to submit quietly to a foreign con-

queror. What the sword had extorted, the sword might again dispute; and it was easy to understand that the Scots only wanted an able and resolute leader, to give the conquerors serious trouble. Such a leader they soon found in William Wallace, who, though not of noble birth, soon made himself the most powerful and famous man in his country.

He was the younger son of a small landholder in the neighbourhood of Paisley, in Renfrewshire, and is said to have been outlawed in his youth for killing an English nobleman; but this is rather a popular opinion than a historical fact. He appears to have been entirely unknown till he emerged from his obscurity to attack the English. Seven years constitute the short period of his exertions and his celebrity; and his actions are more fully recorded in the chronicles of his enemies, scanty as those notices are, than in the memorials of his countrymen. The first achievement by which he attracted attention was his killing the sheriff of Lanark, a brave and powerful man, on the English side. This was probably a sort of guerilla exploit, successfully accomplished at the head of a few wanderers whom he had collected; but it struck the imagination of the people, and from that time the discontented and patriotic eagerly joined him and made him their leader. He was highly qualified for the great task he had undertaken. His personal appearance was prepossessing, his courage daring, his fortitude unwavering, and his liberality unbounded. Wherever he went, success crowned his enterprises, and the English everywhere fell before him. Enlarging his objects with his triumphs, he called upon the men of

rank to assert the cause of their country under his banner. If any Scottish nobleman refused, he seized and imprisoned him till he obeyed. Having thus collected an active and imposing force, he attempted to expel the English from the castles and fortresses in which they had secured themselves throughout the country, till his exploits reached the ears of Edward, and aroused him to serious exertions for the preservation of his newly acquired realm.

Edward could not at first credit the account of this unexpected rising of the Scots. He despatched the Bishop of Durham, a warrior-prelate, to examine and report the truth, and soon received a confirmation of the unwelcome news. He was then about embarking to defend Flanders from a French invasion, and immediately ordered his former general, the Earl of Warenne, to march and chastise the northern revolters. An army of fifty thousand men took the field, and the easy re-conquest of Scotland was confidently anticipated. In the mean time Wallace had been raised to the command of all the Scottish forces. He was besieging the castle of Dundee, in the year 1296, when he heard that the English were advancing to Stirling. Committing the siege to the citizens of the town, which he charged them to prosecute under the penalty of losing life and limb, if they were negligent, he hastened to meet the invaders. The waters of the Forth spread between the English and the town of Stirling; and a rising ground was beyond it. Wallace halted behind the hill to watch the enemy. Warenne sent two Dominican friars to offer peace. "Tell your masters," said Wallace, "we come not here for peace

but to fight, — to revenge and liberate our country ! Let them approach when they please, they will find us ready to meet them to the very beard !” This lofty answer kindled the pride of the English. “ They threaten us ! ” was the general exclamation, “ let us advance ! ” — “ If you pass by the bridge,” said a friendly native, “ you are ruined. Two only can pass it at a time. They flank us, and can attack with all their front. There is a ford not far off, where sixty men may cross together ; let me conduct you to it.” The advice was rejected, and this presumptuousness gave Wallace the brightest day of his short military life.

The English advanced in narrow files upon the bridge. Wallace waited quietly till as many had passed as he was sure of overcoming. He then sent a body of lancers to secure the foot of the bridge, and immediately charged, with speedy destruction, the whole first division of the enemy. Their total discomfiture threw Warrene into a panic, and he fled to Berwick as fast as his horse could carry him, abandoning even the English border-counties to his triumphant antagonist, who followed up his advantage with such promptness that he was soon before Carlisle. He sent in a friar with this message : “ William the Conqueror commands you to surrender.” “ Who is this Conqueror ? ” inquired the governor. “ William, whom you call Wallace.” The summons was defied, and Wallace, finding he could not carry the place by assault, prepared to retreat. The epithet annexed to his name shows the exultation of the Scots at his success, and his popular celebrity.

Wallace, having thus liberated his country from the

English yoke, assumed the title of "Governor of Scotland in the name of King John Baliol," who had been imprisoned in the Tower of London by Edward. He continued his exertions for maintaining the independence of the country; but Edward, having returned from Flanders, made great preparations for a campaign against the Scots; and they soon felt that the crisis of affairs was not yet past. Eighty thousand English soon penetrated beyond Edinburgh, but found themselves severely incommoded by the want of provisions. The scarcity soon became a famine, and Edward was about making dispositions for a retreat, when some one mentioned to him secretly, that the Scottish army under Wallace was only a few miles off, in the forest of Falkirk; that they had heard of the determination of the English to fall back, and had rapidly advanced, hoping to surprise their camp on the following night. Edward immediately gave orders to march toward Falkirk; his troops obeyed, knowing nothing of his design, and wondering at his change of mind.

In the moor near Linlithgow Edward halted his troops for the night. They rested on the bare earth, with their shields for pillows, their armor for beds, and their horses held unbaited near them. As the king was sleeping, his war-horse struck his side with his hoof, and broke two of his ribs. An alarm was spread that the king was hurt; treason was suspected, and a panic might have dispersed the English army, if Edward, subduing his sensations of pain, had not placed himself in his saddle and reassured his troops by his presence. At dawn of day they marched to Falkirk, and beheld the Scottish army. The king

wished to refresh his troops with food, but was reminded that nothing but a little brook separated the two armies. He saw the point of the remark, and instantly ordered the attack.

Wallace formed his men into four circular bodies, facing outwards, with their lances held obliquely, and with archers in their intervals. A peat morass was in his front, and he caused a row of stakes, tied by ropes, to be driven into the ground, as a defence against the English cavalry. Behind these he posted his infantry, with this short address: "I have brought you to the ring, — dance well, if you know how."

Edward formed his troops in three divisions. The first advanced directly towards the enemy, ignorant of the morass, but on reaching it were obliged to deviate to the west. The second line, under the Bishop of Durham, skirted the morass on the east. This division, eager to strike the first blow, marched faster than the Bishop desired, as he thought it better to wait for the support of the other line. "It is not for you to teach us war," cried an ardent knight, who shared the command; "to your mass, Bishop!" and led his willing troops into the conflict with the first circle of the Scots, while the van was also hastening into action. The Scottish cavalry gave way before the impetuosity of the charge, and fled. The northern bowmen, from the forest of Selkirk, fought manfully, but were soon destroyed. The condensed array of the Scottish lancers, with their obliquely protruded weapons, was then full before the English knights, and steadily kept them at bay. In vain they attempted to break the firm array; the foremost of the assailants, with unavailing

bravery, perished on the lances, as Wallace had foreseen, and the repulse of the English chivalry did credit to his military judgment. The circles of infantry were impenetrable. But the English commanders were persevering and expert; they observed that the Scottish array, though so effective for defence, was incompetent to attack; these rings of men, were, in fact, but so many immovable fortresses. The place abounded with large stones, and the English brought up their crossbow-men and machines. Stones and arrows were poured without intermission upon the Scots, till so many were killed, that the rest, overwhelmed, began to fall back and close their circles. At this critical moment, the English cavalry burst in, followed by their foot, before the Scottish officers could re-arrange their broken rings, which this movement threw into irretrievable confusion. The day was now lost, and all that remained for the Scots was to save themselves by flight. Many thousands of them were slain. — Such was the disastrous result of “the fight of Falkirk,” which took place in the summer of 1298.

Had Wallace been allowed the authority due to the superiority of his genius, the result would have been different. But it seems pretty clear that there were dissensions in his army before the action. The proud lairds and chieftains cavilled at the inferiority of the hero's birth, and his right of command was disputed. He had formed a safer plan of operations; but the decision and promptness of the English king having suddenly brought his army before the Scottish lines, the momentous battle became inevitable. This defeat, the natural result of superior discipline and equipment,

and therefore not to be ascribed to any fault in Wallace, destroyed his influence among the selfish chieftains. They foolishly deserted him, and, appointing Robert Bruce and others the guardians of Scotland, they protracted a defensive struggle till 1303, when Edward, having made peace with France, was enabled to pour the whole military force of his kingdom into Scotland. After a siege of ninety days, he made himself master of Stirling, a success which enabled him shortly after to carry his victorious army through the country. Bruce, Comyn, and their followers, surrendered to the English. The Scottish chieftains all abandoned the contest except Wallace, who had been indefatigable in animating the previous warfare. He was invited to imitate them, and put himself under the royal grace; but his unbroken spirit resolutely refused, and he withdrew to a place of concealment.

Edward's resentment was inflamed to the highest degree by this scornful rejection of his offer of pardon. He felt his conquest to be insecure while Wallace lived, and he despatched many parties of men to hunt him out in his retreat. From his enemies the persecuted patriot might seclude himself, but his asylum was accessible to deceitful friends. One of these, directed by a faithless domestic, betrayed him into the hands of Edward. Age had now chilled in King Edward all the generous feelings that ever mitigated his resentments. He saw in Wallace only an irreconcilable adversary, and his vindictive spirit had not the magnanimity to pardon. Wallace was arraigned at Westminster as a traitor. His defence was complete; he had never sworn allegiance to Edward, and owed him none by birth;

he had never acquiesced in his authority ; he could not be a traitor to him. But the English judges adopted the feelings of their sovereign. Wallace was found guilty of treason ; and was hanged, drawn, and quartered on the 23d of August, 1305. His head was exposed on London bridge, and his divided limbs were sent to intimidate Scotland. Edward obtained the wretched gratification of destroying his noble enemy ; but his cruelty has only increased the celebrity of Wallace, and indelibly blotted his own fame.

The Scottish writers, as might be expected, have depicted Wallace as a character amiable and great. The English, too indignant at imputed treason to feel the justice of his motives, and too prejudiced by the representations of the authority they revered not to misconceive his actions, have transmitted to us his portrait distorted with every moral deformity. They assert that he was a rebel, a public robber, a murderer, an incendiary, and an apostate ; more cruel than Herod, more wicked than Nero ; tormenting his prisoners to make them dance in agony ; embowelling infants, and consuming schoolboys in flames. All these imputations and tales may be construed to imply that he was as cordially hated and misrepresented in one country as he was loved and panegyriized in the other. We may believe that he plundered, burnt, and slaughtered, often without mercy, for such was the barbarous character of war in that ferocious age. We find Edward described by his own chroniclers as putting the inhabitants of Berwick to the sword on his first invasion ; and Wallace, the native of a less civilized country, would hardly be more mild. But we may, perhaps, fairly

say, that his cruelties belonged to his age, and that his noble spirit was his own. The world has been too deeply indebted to similar characters and exertions, for us not to feel that Wallace is entitled to all the praise which his countrymen have lavished upon him.

The popular affection for Wallace is still strikingly shown by the many local traditionary remembrances of him which are still preserved in Scotland. The hills, the houses, the castles, and the glens which he frequented ; the stones on which he sat ; the tree in which he was secreted ; the rock from which he plunged into the sea ; the bridge which he crossed ; the forest to which he withdrew ; the foaming cascade behind which he was once screened ; the barn in which he was taken ; and the lake into which, after he was overpowered, he hurled his sword, are still fondly pointed out. "The story of Wallace," says Robert Burns, in his account of his youthful studies, "poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins which will boil along them till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest."



WALES.

LLEWELYN AND THE BARDS.

THE history of Wales, during its earliest period, is little else than the history of perpetual and inglorious bloodshed. Usurpers, ambitious princes, irascible kinsmen, or depredating chieftains, are exhibited as successively destroying each other, and depopulating their country; while England was advancing in a steady progress, under a settled government and internal tranquillity. If the storms of civil warfare sometimes paused, other evils arose to this unhappy people from the hostility of the Anglo-Normans, whose incursions were often temporary conquests. After a series of usurpations, the right line of the ancient British princes was restored, and transmitted through successive descendants to Llewelyn ap Gryffith, the last sovereign of Wales.

The hostilities of William the Conqueror, and his son Rufus, made a serious impression on the southern provinces of Wales; and two colonies of Flemings were, in the reigns of Henry the First and Henry the Second, successfully established there. The military subjection of the country diminished during the reign

of John, and in the first years of his son, Edward the First ; but as this prince advanced to maturity, his martial spirit found in the country an inviting theatre for his exploits. At the age of twenty-four, he had led his father's forces over the Severn, and penetrated to Snowdon ; but the Welsh fell back to their fastnesses, and the conquerors withdrew. When he became king, one of his first projects was to subdue the country and annex it to England.

It is dangerous to praise ambition, but this was one of those few military conquests which benefit humanity. Nothing short of the extinction of its native sovereignties, and its incorporation with England, could terminate those scenes of murder and devastation, which were succeeding each other with no prospect of cessation. Edward's character is responsible for the personal motives in this enterprise ; but its accomplishment was a blessing to both countries. Sufficient causes of quarrel existed between the two kings. Edward began his attack with every form of solemnity. He procured the excommunication of Llewelyn, and the English parliament pronounced judgment against him. The first invasions produced the submission of the Welsh king on conditions sufficiently humiliating. But rigor never conciliates, and the warfare was soon revived by the irritation and pride of the oppressed. On the submission of Llewelyn, his brother David had been treated by Edward with peculiar distinction. This prince has been described as an ingenious, crafty, and plotting man. He soon persuaded Llewelyn to try again the fortune of war, which had twice disgraced him.

Edward advanced into Wales by land, in 1263, and sent his fleet to Anglesey. When he heard of the capture of this island, he exclaimed, "Llewelyn has lost the finest feather in his tail," and caused a floating bridge to be constructed, joining it to the main land. Meantime the Welsh king had fortified himself on the lofty heights of Snowdon, over against the island, and at the first attempt of the English to pass the bridge he defeated them, and drove into the sea upwards of three hundred men. The Welsh thus having the command of the bridge, the English remained pent up in the island, when a traitorous Welshman disclosed to them a ford by which they might cross and attack their enemy in the rear. Llewelyn, ignorant of this treachery, descended from the mountains to reconnoitre the position of the English, and, thinking himself in perfect security, took but a single attendant with him. Having inspected the opposite shore, he was reposing himself in a barn, when he heard a war-cry. He asked of his squire, "Are not my Welshmen at the bridge?" The answer assured him that they were. "Then I am safe," said the king, "though all England should be on the other side."

But the clamor soon increased and drew nearer every moment, and presently he was thrown into astonishment at beholding the English banners advancing. The enemy had struck their unexpected blow at his advanced guard, and their main body was rapidly crossing the river. He now tried to regain his camp, but was suddenly crossed in his way by an English knight, who, ignorant of his rank, but discerning him to be a Welshman, advanced immediately upon him. A

contest was unavoidable, and the king was too courageous to decline it; but he was lightly armed, and the lance of the Englishman was thrown with fatal strength and precision. Llewelyn received it in his side and fell dead. The English knight, unconscious of the importance of his exploit, fell back to join his countrymen, who were now in full march on the fortified mountains. The Welsh formed eagerly on their cliffs, prepared for battle, but awaiting the return and orders of their sovereign. In vain they watched the valleys for his approach, in vain ascended the highest eminences to descry him; they saw their dreaded foes already climbing their steeps to close in deadly conflict, and they had no royal leader to animate or guide them. Before they recovered from their disappointment, the English banners began to wave on their heights, and they found themselves attacked on all sides with an impetuosity which soon scattered them in a panic from which they could not be rallied. All who could escape the English sword fled in hopeless confusion, and the unexpected casualties of that eventful day annexed the sovereignty of Wales to the crown of England with a facility that could never have been anticipated.

The curiosity of the knight having been excited by the rumors of the field, he descended into the valley to see whom he had encountered. He found the dead body still on the ground, and, examining its face, it was recognized to be Llewelyn. Eager to reap the full profit of his fortunate encounter, he degraded his chivalry by cutting off the head of the corpse, which he carried to Edward. The king had not the magna-

nimity of William the Conqueror, who reprimanded the knight who had wounded the dead body of Harold, but sent the head of Llewelyn to London, adorned in derision with a silver crown, that it might be exhibited to the populace in Cheapside, and fixed upon the Tower.

Edward is said to have secured his conquest by the massacre of the Welsh bards, who might have kept alive the national spirit and nourished the animosity of their countrymen to the English. This is rather a fiction of an irritated people than a historical fact. The destruction of the independent sovereignties of Wales abolished the patronage of the bards, and in the cessation of internal warfare and external ravages they lost their favorite subjects and most familiar imagery. They declined because they were no longer encouraged; and their disappearance has been mistaken for their forcible extirpation. The bards of Wales were supposed to be endowed with powers equal to inspiration. They were the oral historians of all past transactions, public and private. They related the great events of the state, and, like the skalds of the northern nations, retained the memory of numberless transactions which otherwise would have perished in oblivion. They had another talent which probably endeared them more than all the rest to the Welsh nobility, that of being most accomplished genealogists, and flattering their vanity in singing the deeds of an ancestry derived from the most distant period. No public festivity, great feast, or wedding could be duly solemnized without the presence of the bards and minstrels. A glorious emulation arose among them, and prizes were bestowed on the most worthy.

The court bard was a domestic officer. He held his land free, and was entitled to a horse and a woollen garment from the king, and a linen garment from the queen. At the three principal feasts, of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, he sat next to the prefect of the palace, who delivered the harp into his hand, and at these festivals he had the robe of the steward for his fee. When a song was required, the bard who had gained the badge of the chair, in musical contest, first sung a hymn of glory to God, after that another in honor of the prince, and then the bard of the hall was to sing some other subject. If the queen desired a song, he attended her in her own chamber. When he accompanied the prince's domestic servants upon a foray, he had an ox or a cow from the booty, and, while the prey was dividing, he sung the praises of the monarchy. He also sung in the same strain at the head of the troops, when drawn up for fight. This was to remind the Welsh of their ancient right to the whole kingdom ; for, their inroads being almost always on the English territories, they thought they did no more than seize on their own. When invested with this office, the prince gave the bard a harp, and the queen a gold ring. If he asked any gift or favor of the prince, he was fined an ode or poem ; if of a nobleman, three ; if of a common person, he was obliged to sing till he was weary or fell asleep.

Wales, immediately after its incorporation with England, ceased to be the theatre of turbulence, bloodshed, and distress. Nothing more strongly marks the beneficial change than the new features which the Welsh poetry assumed after that event. We see no

more, in endless repetition, the horrible imagery of the prowling wolf, the gushing blood, and the screaming kite feasting on human prey. It is no longer the baneful encomium on the wasteful conflict and the barbarous chief. The fair sex now began to form the subject of the bardic lay, and their charms imparted that inspiration, which had previously been derived only from the mead-cup and the princely gift. The praise of the sword was abandoned for more pacific themes; and the mountain muse found that delight in beauty and rural nature, which she had formerly experienced only in murder and devastation.





St. Patrick, preaching.

IRELAND.

EARLY HISTORY OF IRELAND.

THE vanity of nations, as well as of individuals, leads them to set up pretensions to high antiquity of origin. Thus the Chaldeans traced back their history for a space of four hundred and seventy thousand years; and the Egyptians were scarcely less moderate in their claims. It is a good evidence of the credulity which this species of pride inspires, that the faith of the latter people in their fabulous chronology was not disturbed by a chasm of eleven thousand three hundred and forty years, which occurs between two of their kings, Menes and Sethon.

If the bardic historians of Ireland have been a little less extravagant in their pretensions, it is because their stories were fabricated at a later date, and after the Bible had been introduced among them. They therefore commence their story but a few weeks before the flood, when, agreeably to their legends, Cesara, a niece of Noah, arrived with a colony of antediluvians upon the Irish coast. These were, at different times, followed by other bands; and in the fourth century

after the flood, Ireland was invaded and taken possession of by Partholen, a descendant of Japheth.

After holding the country for three hundred years, the race of Partholen was swept away by a plague; and, in the time of Jacob, another colony, led by Nemedius, took possession of the country. The wars that these settlers waged with the Fomorians, an African tribe of sea-rovers, form one of the favorite themes of the ancient Irish muse.

The next, and, in number, the third of these colonies, were Belgians, and known under the name of Fir-Bolgs; these subjected the country to the yoke of regal authority, and divided it into five kingdoms,—a form of government which existed till the twelfth century of the Christian era. The dynasty of the Fir-Bolgs was, however, soon disturbed by the Tuatha de Danaan,—a people famed for necromancy, which they had learned in Greece. Aided by the Stone of Destiny, the Sorcerer's Spear, and the Magic Caldron, which they obtained in Denmark and Norway, and led by Nuad of the Silver Hand, the Danaans landed upon the island under cover of a mist, and penetrated into the country before they were discovered. The alarmed inhabitants retreated before them into Con-naught, when, at Moytura, on the borders of Lake Masg, that bloody conflict took place, which is called the Battle of the Field of the Tower, and which was long a favorite theme of Irish song. Having driven their opposers to the Isle of Man, North Aran, and the Hebrides, the victorious Danaans became sole masters of the country. But they in turn were dispossessed of their sway by the Scotie or Milesian colony, which

through so long a series of ages furnished Ireland with her kings.

This celebrated colony, though coming directly from Spain, was originally, we are told, of the Scythic race; and its various migrations and adventures, before reaching its "Isle of Destiny" in the west, are detailed by the bards with all that fond and lingering minuteness, in which fancy, playing with its own creations, so much delights to indulge. Grafting upon this Scythic colony the traditional traces and stories of their country respecting the Phœnicians, they have contrived to collect together, without much regard either to chronology, history, or geography, every circumstance that could tend to dignify and add lustre to such an event,—an event upon which not only the rank of their country itself, in the heraldry of nations, depended, but in which every individual, entitled by his Milesian blood to lay claim to a share in so glorious a pedigree, was imagined to be interested. In order more completely to identify the ancestors of these Scythic colonists with the Phœnicians, the bards relate that by one of them, named Fenius, to whom the invention of the Ogham character is attributed, an academy for languages was instituted upon the Plain of Shinar, in which that purest dialect of the Irish, called the Bearla Feini, was cultivated.

From thence, tracing this chosen race in their migrations to different countries, and connecting them, by marriage or friendship, during their long sojourn in Egypt, with most of the heroes of Scripture history, the bards conduct them at length, by a route not very intelligible, to Spain. There, by their valor and

enterprise, they succeed in liberating the country from its Gothic invaders, and in a short time make themselves masters of the whole kingdom. Still haunted, however, in the midst of their glory, by the remembrance of a prophecy which had declared that "an island in the Western Sea was to be their ultimate place of rest," the two sons of their great leader, Milesius, at length fitted out a grand martial expedition, and set sail, in thirty ships, from the coast of Gallicia, for Ireland. According to the bardic chronology, thirteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, but according to Nennius Aengus and others, near five centuries later, this "lettered and martial colony arrived, under the command of the sons of Milesius, on the Irish coasts; and, having effected a landing at Inbher Sceine, the present Bantry Bay, on Thursday, the first of May, A. M. 2934, achieved that great and memorable victory over the Tuatha de Danaan, which secured to themselves and their princely descendants, for more than two thousand years, the supreme dominion over all Ireland."

Such is a very brief outline of the early history of Ireland, as furnished by the bards. It would, perhaps, be equally unwise wholly to adopt or reject their story. It is as probable that there is some foundation, in reality, for most of these events, as it is that the Grecian tales of Hercules and Theseus had their origin in truth. But it is impossible to separate the fabulous from the historical; and we are therefore compelled to leave the subject in one of those happy mists, in which antiquaries may continue to fight their bloodless battles.

Although the Milesian colony is embraced in the

bardic fables, it seems properly to come within the scope of veritable history. We do not, indeed, adopt even the chronology of the sanguine Irish historians of modern date. Dr. O'Connor, who has bestowed vast learning upon the subject, considers Kimboath the fifty-sixth king of the Milesian line, and carries his reign back to a period at least two centuries before Christ.

Leaving the date, as a matter of entire uncertainty, we may proceed to some details respecting the Scotie or Milesian dynasty. It seems that the tribe came to Ireland under the two sons of Milesius, Heber and Heremon. They divided the country between them, constituting their brother Emergin arch bard, or presiding minister over the departments of law, poetry, and religion.

The two kings, Heber and Heremon, soon quarrelled for the possession of a beautiful valley, and Heber was slain, his brother now becoming sole sovereign of the island. Passing over the immediate successors of Heremon, we may notice Tighernmas, who was miraculously destroyed, with a vast multitude around him, for offering sacrifice to the idol Crom Cruach. Achy, his successor, passed an edict, regulating the exact colors of the garments the different classes of people should wear. Ollam Foodhla, the royal sage, as he is called, instituted the triennial convention at Tara, in which there seemed an approach to representative government; the leading persons of the three orders, the king, the Druids or priests, and the plebeians, being convened for the making of such laws as the public good required. In the presence of these assemblies, the

events to be entered on the public Psalter or record, kept at Tara, were examined and prepared.

The space between Ollam Foodhla and Hugony the Great, the royal builder of the famous palace of Emania, is filled up by the bards with thirty-two kings, all of whom died by violence except three. In the reign of Conary the Great, which coincides with the beginning of the Christian era, the young hero Cuchullin was slain in the full flush of his glorious career. With the fame of this Irish warrior most readers have been made acquainted by the poems of Macpherson, attributed to Ossian. Tuathal the Acceptable, after having been compelled to fly his kingdom, was restored about the year 130, and introduced various improvements in the laws and institutions of the country. Feidlim the Legislator, and Con of the Hundred Battles, intervened between Tuathal and Cormac Ulfadha, who is said to have founded three academies at Tara, to have revised the Psalter from the time of Ollam Foodhla; and, having lost an eye in repelling an attack upon his palace, resigned his crown, in obedience to a law which excluded any one marked with a personal blemish from the throne. Having retired to a thatched cabin at Kells, this king devoted himself to the writing of books, one of which, "The Advice to a King," was said to be extant in the seventeenth century.

A long space now occurs, in which there is little of interest. Succeeding to the usurper Colla, Nial of the Nine Hostages made a formidable invasion of Britain, in the fourth century, and afterwards extended his enterprises to the coast of Gaul, where he was assassinated by one of his followers with a poisoned arrow.

It was in the course of this expedition that the soldiers of Nial carried off a youth destined to work a great revolution in Ireland.

Such, from the period of Kimboath, is the semi-authentic history of Ireland, based upon the annalists, catching, however, an occasional ray of light from the bardic legends. If it cannot be set down as entirely worthy of our confidence, we may at least rest in the belief, that, in its general outline, and doubtless in its prominent characters, it affords a general representation of truth.

Succeeding to Nial of the Nine Hostages, Dathy, the last of the pagan kings of Ireland, like his predecessor, ravaged the coast of Gaul, and, making his way to the foot of the Alps, was there slain by a flash of lightning. Leogaire, who reigned at the time of St. Patrick's mission, was killed by the sun and wind, for violating an oath.

The authentic history of Ireland properly begins with St. Patrick, in the fifth century. The name of this Christian apostle has been so often connected with incredible tales and miraculous legends, that it is apt to excite ridicule in the minds of many persons. But an examination of his true history will lead every fair-minded individual to a very different estimate of his character. St. Patrick appears to have been a native of Boulogne, in France, and to have been born about the year 387, A. D. In his sixteenth year, he was made captive, as before intimated, in a marauding expedition, conducted by Nial of the Nine Hostages. Being carried to Ireland, he was sold as a slave to a man named Milcho, living in what is now called the

county of Antrim. The occupation assigned him was the tending of sheep. His lonely rambles over the mountain and the forest are described by himself as having been devoted to constant prayer, to thought, and to the nursing of those deep devotional feelings, which, even at that time, he felt strongly stirring within him. At length, after six years of servitude, the desire of escaping from bondage arose in his heart. "A voice in his dreams," he says, "told him that he was soon to go to his own country, and that a ship was ready to convey him thither." Accordingly, in the seventh year of his slavery, he betook himself to flight, and, making his way to the south-western coast of Ireland, was there received on board a merchant vessel, which, after a voyage of three days, landed him on the coast of Gaul. He now returned to his parents, and, after spending some time with them, devoted himself to study in the celebrated monastery of St. Martin at Tours. During this period, it would appear that his mind still dwelt with fond recollection upon Ireland; for he had a remarkable dream, which, in those superstitious ages, was regarded by him as a vision from Heaven. In this he seemed to receive innumerable letters from Ireland, in one of which was written, "The voice of the Irish." In these natural workings of a warm and pious imagination, so unlike the prodigies and miracles with which most of the legends of his life abound, we see what a hold the remembrance of Ireland had taken of his youthful fancy, and how fondly he already contemplated some holy work in her service.

Having left the seminary at Tours, he spent several

years in travelling, study, and meditation ; but at length, being constituted a bishop, and having, at his own request, been appointed by the see of Rome to that service, he proceeded on his long contemplated mission to Ireland.

Let us pause a moment to consider the state of Ireland at this period, that we may duly estimate the task which lay before this apostle, and which we shall find he gloriously accomplished. The neighbouring island of Britain, it will be remembered, was still under the Roman yoke ; but, as before remarked, no Roman soldier had ventured to cross the narrow channel between Britain and Ireland and set his foot upon Irish soil. To Ireland, then, Rome had imparted none of her civilization. The country was, in fact, in a state of barbarism ; the government was the same as that which had been handed down for centuries, and which continued for ages after. The country was divided into five principal kingdoms, whose chiefs acknowledged a nominal allegiance to one principal sovereign who was monarch of the realm. But there were still a great number of petty chiefs, also claiming the title of kings, and often setting up for independence, or disputing the authority of their accustomed masters. The wrangles between these rival powers were savage and incessant ; and the people were therefore embroiled in almost constant war. Among the rapid succession of princes, history tells us of but few that did not die by violence. In some of the dynasties, whole centuries pass, affording but a ghastly record of murdering and murdered chiefs. In such a state of things, it is obvious that there could be little progress in the

arts of peace, or in that culture which proceeds from the diffusion of intellectual light. A knowledge of letters, indeed, is said to have existed in the country, and there was, no doubt, much mystical lore among the Druidical priesthood, who, at this dark period of society, appear to have led both prince and people, as their cheated and deluded captives, whithersoever they pleased. The dominion, indeed, of these artful priests over the mind of the nation seems to have been absolute, and they exerted it with unsparing rigor. The whole people were subjected to an oppressive routine of rites and ceremonies, among which the sacrifice of human victims — men, women, and children — was common. The details of these shocking superstitions are, indeed, too frightful to be repeated here. It is sufficient to say, that the mission of St. Patrick contemplated the conversion of a nation, wedded to these unholy rites, to the pure and peaceful doctrines of the gospel. He came alone, armed with no earthly power, arrayed in no visible pomp, to overturn the cherished dynasty of ages ; to beat down a formidable priesthood ; to slay the many-headed monster, prejudice ; to draw aside the thick cloud which overspread a nation, and permit the light of Heaven to shine upon it.

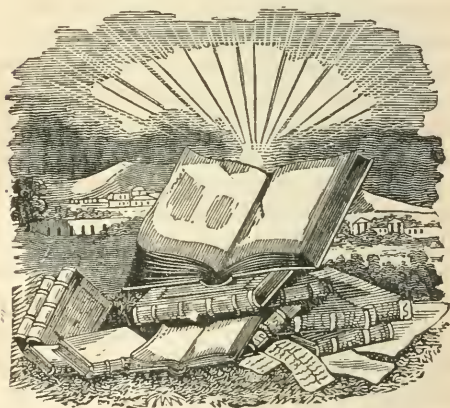
There was something in the very conception of this noble enterprise which marks St. Patrick as endowed with the true spirit of an apostle. We cannot follow him through the details of his mission. It is sufficient to say, that, exercising no power but persuasion, and using no weapon but truth, he proceeded from place to place, reasoning with the people, combating the Druid, and preaching to the prince. It was on one of

these occasions that he is said to have illustrated the doctrine of the Trinity, by stooping to the ground and plucking a branch of trefoil, or three-leaved clover, — maintaining that the three leaves upon one stem displayed, in nature, a trinity combined with unity, which might fitly represent the Triune Deity whom he preached. Thus, by his zeal and address, in the brief space of thirty years, St. Patrick introduced Christianity into every province in the land, and that without one drop of bloodshed. Everywhere the frowning altars of the Druids fell before him; the superstitious prince did homage to the cross, and the proud priest of the sun bent his knee to the true God. Christianity was thus introduced and spread over Ireland without violence, and by the agency of a single individual.

Such appear to be the true character and history of St. Patrick, divested of the marvels and miracles with which superstition has embellished them. Such, at least, is the view taken by the Irish historian;* and such is the image pictured in the faith or fancy of the Irish people. And where is there a brighter page in history than this? Where is there a life more ennobled by lofty purposes, more illustrious from its glorious results, than this of St. Patrick? Surely, such an individual is no proper theme for ridicule or contempt. If we Americans do homage to the memory of Washington, who aided in delivering our country from tyranny, the Irishman may as justly hold dear the cherished recollections of him who redeemed his country

* This is substantially the account given of St. Patrick by Thomas Moore, in his "History of Ireland."

from paganism. Aside from the immediate benefits which St. Patrick secured to Ireland, he has left to all mankind the heritage of a glorious truth, — which is, that, in contending with human power, human passions, and human depravity, the minister of Jesus Christ needs no other weapon than truth, enforced by holy example. He has left us an imperishable lesson of wisdom, — that moral suasion can overturn the dominion of ignorance and prejudice, which might for ever hold the sword at bay.



FRANCE.

CHARLEMAGNE AND HIS TIMES.

A DISTINGUISHED epoch in the history of the world was formed by Charlemagne, the only prince, as remarked by Gibbon, in whose favor the title of *Great* has been indissolubly blended with the name. In the dark ages of European history, his reign affords a solitary resting-place between two long periods of turbulence and ignominy. He stands like a beacon in the waste, or a rock in the broad ocean. The mighty influence which he exercised upon the age, the illustrious families which have prided themselves in him as their progenitor, the very legends of romance, which are full of his fabulous exploits, have cast a lustre around his head, and testify the greatness that has embodied itself in his name.

Thick darkness had settled over Europe with the irruption of the barbarians of the North. A long race of sovereigns, called in history the Sluggard Kings, exercised a nominal sway over France; but the government was a chaos, formed of the rude, irregular, and contending passions of individuals. The dukes,

the counts, the bishops, and the patricians all struggled for their own aggrandizement. There was no popular party. Letters, science, peace, and stability were unknown. The seas of blood which were poured out in the intestine struggles of the French nobles had washed away every tincture of literature which had been left by the Romans ; commerce and industry were crushed under the iron steps of civil war. No principle of law or justice remained to check the strong or to protect the weak, and no acknowledged power of legislation existed except in the sword. It would be difficult, as an eminent historian has remarked, to find anywhere more vice or less virtue than in the annals of the Merovingian dynasty. Charles Martel, mayor of the palace, under Childeric the Second, reduced this chaos to a certain degree of order ; but the sciences which had fled, and the arts which had been lost, were unrecovered, till a brighter era opened, and a more lofty and comprehensive mind awoke to recall the treasures of former days.

This was Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, a prince, who, like Napoleon, seemed born for universal innovation, and who exhibited in all his acts that grandeur of conception which distinguishes extraordinary minds. We see him conquering barbarous nations and consolidating a great empire, reforming the coinage and establishing the legal divisions of money, gathering around him the learned of every country, founding schools and libraries, interfering, but with the tone of a king, in religious controversies, undertaking, for the benefit of commerce, the magnificent enterprise of uniting the Rhine and the Danube, and meditating to

mould the discordant codes of Roman and barbarian laws into a uniform system.

Charlemagne was born in the year 742. The place of his birth is not known, some writers mentioning Aix-la-Chapelle, and others the castle of Ingelheim, near Mentz. A great obscurity also rests over the early part of his life. No records of his education have come down to us, nor any of those particulars of his early years which are generally ornamented by the invention and fancy of biographers. His father, Pepin the Short, mayor of the palace, assumed the title of King of France about seven years after the birth of Charles. At his death, in 768, the kingdom was divided between Charles and his brother Carloman. These princes quarrelled, and their hostility would have produced fatal effects, had not the death of Carloman, in 771, put an end to their disputes. This event left Charles, without a struggle or a crime, sole monarch of the Franks, and his vast and ambitious genius being thus freed from every check, he was placed in a condition to plan those great political schemes which have conferred immortality on the name of Charlemagne.

His reign lasted forty-six years, and was a continued series of victories, political reforms, and remarkable events, which, in the midst of barbarism, offer to our view objects worthy of absorbing our whole attention. Previous to the death of his father he had distinguished himself as a warrior by the defeat of Hunalde, the revolted Duke of Aquitaine. On his accession to the throne of the Franks, he was in the flower of his age, remarkably tall, robust, and active,

in the full vigor both of his physical and intellectual faculties. The first military exploit of the king was a campaign against the Saxons. France had long been at war with this people, who preserved all the ferocity of the German manners, while their courage was further sustained by the love of liberty. Pepin had subjected them to tribute, and compelled them to receive Christian missionaries ; but they felt the strongest reluctance to pay the one and embrace the religion of the other. These barbarians having massacred some of the missionaries, Charlemagne took up arms against them in 772. Though often defeated, the Saxons still rebelled, their general, the celebrated Witikind, incessantly exciting their ardor for war, and their love of independence. In the first campaign, he gained a complete victory over the French. Charlemagne took a cruel revenge by the massacre of Verdun, when upwards of four thousand chief men of the Saxons were beheaded. Witikind, after being defeated with great slaughter in several battles, made his submission and embraced Christianity. But, though he kept his engagements with fidelity, he never could tame the fierce spirit of his countrymen. They often submitted, and as often revolted ; but, at last, after a war of thirty years, they were entirely subjugated by transplanting many thousand families of them into Flanders and other countries. The most resolute fled into Scandinavia, carrying with them an implacable hatred of the dominion and religion of the Franks.

Every nation in Germany that dared to offer the least resistance sunk under the arms of the French conqueror. The Duke of Bavaria, having rebelled,

was stripped of his dominions. The Slavonians in Pomerania were subdued. The Huns, or Avars, who had settled in Hungary, were driven beyond the Raab. Charlemagne needed only show himself in order to disperse his enemies. In all his wars, the newly conquered nations, or those whom fear had made his dependent allies, were employed to subjugate their neighbours, and the incessant waste of fatigue and the sword was supplied by a fresh population that swelled the expanding circle of dominion.

The conqueror looked upon Christianity as the best instrument for softening the barbarous manners of a ferocious people, without reflecting that Christians are not made by violence. His laws for the Saxons strike us as almost equally barbarous with their own manners. He obliged them to receive baptism on pain of death, and made it a capital offence to break the fast of Lent; in a word, substituting force instead of persuasion. It must not be concealed that the great qualities of Charlemagne were alloyed by the vices of a barbarian and a conqueror. This union of brute violence with grand schemes and elevated views of national improvement has something like a modern parallel in the person of Peter of Russia; yet the sovereign of the Franks must be ranked far above the Czar.

The Saxon wars were spread over a great part of the reign of Charlemagne. Other wars and conquests in the mean time occupied his arms. In 773, he marched into Italy, on the pretext of delivering the Holy See from the oppression of the Lombards. Laying siege at the same time to the cities of Verona and Pavia, he captured, in the former, the widow and child-

ren of his brother Carloman, who had sought refuge in Italy from his jealousy. In Pavia, he gained possession of the person of Desiderius, king of the Lombards, whom he carried prisoner to France, thus completely extinguishing the Lombard monarchy. During the siege of Pavia, he took up his march for Rome with a considerable portion of his army, and an immense train of bishops, priests, and nobles. Shouts and songs of triumph greeted him on the way. Towns, castles, and villages poured forth their inhabitants to see him pass. The noble, the citizen, and the serf joined in acclamations to welcome the conqueror of the Lombards, and expiring Italy seemed to revive at the glorious aspect of the victor. Thirty miles from the city, he was met by all those who could still boast of generous blood in Rome, with ensigns and banners; and at a mile's distance from the walls, all the schools came forth to receive him, bearing branches of palm and olive, and singing in the sweet Roman tongue the praises of their deliverer. Since the days of her ancient splendor, never had Rome beheld such a spectacle as entered her gates with the monarch of the Franks. Pope Adrian the First recognized him as Patrician of Rome, and King of Italy. At the surrender of Pavia, he was crowned with the diadem of the Lombard monarchs, the iron crown, which has in our day encircled the brows of Napoleon. After an expedition of fifteen months he returned to France.

The ambition of Charlemagne was excited in a different quarter in 778, when several Moorish chiefs in the northwestern parts of Spain implored his protection and invited him to accept their vassalage. He

assembled an army in Aquitaine, crossed the Pyrenees, penetrated as far as Saragossa, captured that city, and received the submission of all the neighbouring lords. But his return to France was signalized by a disaster which has afforded a copious theme for poetry and romance, — the defeat of Roncesvalles, — where, in the exaggerated language of Milton,

“ Charlemagne and all his peerage fell,
By Fontarabia.”

News of threatened hostilities on the Rhenish frontier caused him to hasten his march homeward. Dividing his army into two bodies, he advanced in person at the head of the first division, leaving all the baggage with the rear guard, which comprised a strong force, and was commanded by some of the most renowned of his chieftains, among whom was Roland or Orlando, the nephew of Charlemagne. Mounted on heavy horses, and loaded with a complete armor of iron, the soldiers pursued their march through the narrow passes of the Pyrenees, without suspecting the neighbourhood of an enemy. The king himself, with the first division, issued from these intricate defiles and trackless woods unmolested ; but when the rear body, following leisurely at a considerable distance, had reached the wild and narrow valley of Roncesvalles, the woods and rocks around them suddenly bristled into life, and they were attacked on all sides by the perfidious Gascons, whose light arms, swift arrows, and knowledge of the country gave them every advantage over their opponents.

In the first panic and confusion, the Franks were

driven down into the bottom of the pass, embarrassed both by their arms and baggage. The Gascons pressed them on every point, and slaughtered them like a herd of deer, singling them out with their arrows from above, and rolling down the rocks upon their heads. Never wanting in courage, the Franks fought to the last man, and died unconquered. Orlando and his companions, after innumerable deeds of valor, were slain with the rest; and the Gascons, satiated with carnage and rich in plunder, dispersed among the mountains, leaving Charlemagne to seek fruitlessly for vengeance.

During the lapse of many centuries, tradition has hung about this famous spot, and the memory of Orlando and his companions has been consecrated in a thousand shapes throughout the country. The *Casque de Roland* is the name of a mountain flower of the Pyrenees. The stroke of his sword is shown upon the rocks. The tales and superstitions of the district are full of his exploits and fame. Ariosto, on the slight basis which history affords, has raised up the splendid structure of his immortal poem, and inscribed it with the name of Orlando; but, without this, that name would still have been repeated through all the valleys of the Pyrenees, and ornamented with the fictions of a thousand years.

The year 800 was rendered memorable by the crowning of Charlemagne as Emperor of the West. Leo the Third, who succeeded Adrian, in 796, immediately on his accession, sent the king the standard of Rome, requesting him to despatch some person to that city to receive the allegiance of the inhabitants. Three years after, two men of considerable rank among the clergy,

relations of the deceased Pope, and enemies of Leo, made an accusation against him, attacked him in the street, overwhelmed him with blows, attempted to tear out his eyes and tongue, and shut him up, half killed, in the dungeon of a monastery. He found means to escape, and fled to Charlemagne, who sent him back with the greatest honors, and, shortly after, followed him to Italy. On Christmas day, 800, while the king was attending mass in St. Peter's church, the Pope, in the midst of the service, at the moment when the monarch was kneeling at the altar, suddenly placed on his head an imperial crown, and the multitude instantly shouted, "Long life and victory to Charles Augustus, crowned by God, great and pacific Emperor of the Romans!" We are assured that Charlemagne was taken by surprise on this occasion, and that he declared he would not have gone to church that day, had he suspected the design. Those who choose may believe the story; what we are sure of is, that he did not shake the diadem from his brows.

Charlemagne, Emperor of the West, by his splendid title, his martial successes, the extent of his dominions, and the wisdom of his government, had now become famous throughout the civilized world. He was not only respected by the Moors of Spain, but even the haughty and potent Caliph Haroun Al Raschid sent him an embassy of friendship, and a variety of rich presents. The description of one of these will show the perfection to which the mechanic arts had reached among the Arabians of that age. It was a clock of gilt bronze, round which the course of the twelve hours was exhibited; at the end of each hour, the number

of brazen balls which were requisite to mark the time were thrown out from above, and, falling one after another into a cymbal below, struck the hour required. In like manner, a number of horsemen issued from windows around the dial. An unbroken friendship and sincere admiration existed between these two great monarchs of the East and West, during all the remainder of their respective reigns. Haroun not only protected the Christian pilgrims who resorted to Jerusalem, but he sent to Charlemagne the keys of the holy places and a standard, as a mark of sovereignty in that city.

The empire of Charlemagne attained nearly the extent of that of ancient Rome in Europe. To the kingdom of France, which then comprised the Low Countries and all the left bank of the Rhine, he added Aquitaine, Gascony, the country of the Pyrenees, and Catalonia. In Italy, as King of the Lombards and Patrician of Rome, he reigned from the Alps to the borders of Calabria. He united under his sceptre all the nations of Germany, the pagan tribes on the northwest and the borders of Poland excepted; and, by his conquest of the Avars, he obtained possession of Hungary, Transylvania, Istria, Croatia, and most of Dalmatia. He was indefatigable in his application to the cares of government. His love of learning and his liberal efforts to promote it were wonderful in that unlettered age. He collected scholars from all parts, and placed them at the head of institutions for education. In particular, he invited the famous Alcuin from England, made him his companion, and followed his advice in all matters for the promotion of

letters and science. He instituted a sort of academy in his court, every member of which assumed some celebrated name of antiquity. He collected all the ancient songs relative to the history of the Franks and Germans, and, while at his meals, caused to be read to him passages from history or the writings of the Fathers. His own education had been neglected in his youth, yet his ardor in the pursuit of knowledge was such that he applied himself to the driest and most rudimentary parts of a schoolboy's studies after his arrival at manhood. His knowledge of Latin and Greek is said to have been perfect; the former he spoke as fluently as his vernacular tongue.

Charlemagne died in 814, in the seventy-second year of his age. His life was a life of improvement on all that immediately preceded him. He was great both in war and peace. War was deemed a necessity of the age and country; the Franks could hardly have been governed without it. This prince, happily for himself and for his people, brought with him to the throne talents adapted to his position, and, happily for the world, possessed likewise the spirit of civilization and improvement. His great success in civilization was all his own. He took possession of a kingdom torn by factions, surrounded by enemies, desolated by long wars, disorganized by intestine strife, and as profoundly ignorant as the absence of all literature could make it. By the continual and indefatigable exertion of his mental and corporeal powers, he restored order and harmony, formed a great empire, established internal tranquillity, and raised up science and arts. His highest eulogy is written in the calamities

of preceding and subsequent times. Those were ages of great misery to the people, the severets, perhaps, that Europe has ever known. The reign of Charlemagne was a relief to the general suffering of Christendom. Even under his sway, we have proofs of no trifling calamities endured by the people. The light which shone around him was that of a consuming fire. After his death, France was doomed to another age of darkness. Italy fell into worse disorders than before ; but Germany, which owed its redemption from the night of barbarism solely to his genius, received light which has continued unextinguished to the present day.



THE CRUSADES.*

*Peter the Hermit and his Followers.*

THE history of mankind offers few events more striking than the Crusades, an enterprise which in its day was esteemed the noblest effort of piety and zeal, but which in the present age is regarded as a stupendous monument of human folly. Such is the stern severity with which a cool and calculating posterity

* We have placed this article amid the sketches drawn from the history of France, partly because the French princes, knights, and nobles took so large a share in the Crusades, and partly to give them a proper place in relation to other important topics which are presented to the reader.

will reverse the judgment passed by an age upon itself. All Europe combined for once, and for once only, in a common undertaking ; yet Europe was in the end unsuccessful. A view of the heroic ages of Christianity, in regard to their grand and general results, is a useful and important, but a melancholy lesson. The crusades were a Holy War, a war undertaken from the impulse of religious feelings ; yet this war was most savage and cruel. The whole enterprise retarded the march of civilization, thickened the clouds of superstition, and encouraged intolerance, cruelty, and fierceness. Religion lost its mildness and charity, and even its mitigating qualities of honor and courtesy. The wars of the crusades do not seem to have had the effect which has attended other great wars, that of rousing Europe from intellectual torpidity, and strengthening and refining the tone of mind. Those were times of action rather than of letters. Spoliation and slaughter were accounted the highest pitch of human glory, and all that in reality merited fame and applause was hid in silence and obscurity. Modes for the destruction of men, and not for their improvement, occupied the minds of Christians.

The fanatic enthusiasm of an obscure individual first set the ball in motion, which rolled with such impetuous force from Europe into Asia. Peter, a hermit of Picardy, on his return from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, represented the condition of the Holy City, and the cruel oppressions suffered by the Christians there, in such lively colors to Pope Urban the Second, that this pontiff countenanced him in a project to set both kings and people in motion for the recovery of

the sepulchre of Christ. This hermit, of a hideous figure, covered with rags, walking barefooted, speaking as a prophet, and hearkened to as such, inspired the people everywhere with an enthusiasm similar to his own. The Pope held a council at Placentia, in Italy, in 1095, to determine upon the expedition. Thousands of people flocked to this meeting, and approved of the proposal. But the most vivid demonstration was made at the council of Clermont, in France, the same year. The Pope preached up the Holy War as the means of wiping away all offences which the people had committed. He placed all who took up arms under the protection of the Church, and promised that God would give them victory, and the spoils of the Mussulmans. The assembly set up a shout. "It is the will of God!" echoed from every quarter, and French vivacity was instantly aroused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm.

Every class of people, old men, women, and children, entered into the cause with the same lively spirit. The promise of pardon for sins, and the influence of curiosity, the love of adventure, the hope of gaining thrones and dominions, and the certain expectation of sitting in the next world as judges over the infidels, were the moving causes which incited persons of every rank to rush by hundreds of thousands into this undertaking.

All the wars of the European powers among themselves were laid aside for the prosecution of this general war against the infidels. People sold their estates to defray the expense of equipping themselves for the march; and the churches and monasteries were en-

riched by the purchase of vast quantities of property at a low price. The multitude of people who enlisted would exceed all belief, were we not aware of the strength of the motives and passions which incited them to action. Contemporary historians estimate the number of those who embarked in the first crusade at six millions ; the most moderate computation is one million three hundred thousand. They marched with a red cross sewed on their clothes, from which was derived the name of *croisade* or *crusade*. When the cross had once been taken, the wearers were obliged to march, under pain of excommunication ; but this badge gained them a dispensation from all penance. Thousands of the most profligate and abandoned wretches found, in this manner, a plenary indulgence for all their crimes, and probably no band of professed pirates and freebooters ever contained a more atrocious set of villains than the armies of the first crusaders. Peter the Hermit, with sandals on his feet, a rope about his middle, acting both as prophet and general, and persuaded that God would work miracles to supply all their wants, was the first that set out, at the head of eighty thousand men without provisions or discipline. The command was shared with him by a poor gentleman called Walter the Penniless. These banditti committed the most dreadful outrages on their march through Hungary and Bulgaria, and were almost exterminated by the inhabitants before they reached Constantinople. Godeschald, a German priest, followed next with a similar rabble. These let loose their pious fury upon the Jews, thousands of whom they massacred in cold blood. After this, they pillaged everybody without distinction,

till the inhabitants rose and cut them nearly all off. Of both these armies, about twenty thousand starving wretches at length reached Constantinople.

With the assistance of the Greek Emperor Alexius, they crossed the Bosphorus, and, in spite of his prudential warnings, divided their forces to plunder the Turkish provinces of Asia Minor. In order to decoy them into a snare, the sultan caused a report to be spread, that Nice, his capital, had fallen into the hands of an advanced body of crusaders. Allured by the prospect of sharing in the spoils of this city, they blindly rushed into the heart of a hostile country ; but when they descended into the plain of Nice, instead of being welcomed by the sight of the Christian banners on its walls, they found themselves surrounded by the Turkish cavalry. In the first onset, Walter fell bravely, covered with wounds ; the disorderly multitude was immediately overwhelmed and slaughtered ; a remnant of three thousand escaped by flight to the nearest Byzantine fortress ; and a huge mound, in which the victors piled the bones of the slain, formed an ominous monument of disaster for succeeding hosts of crusaders.

The numbers, the gross superstition, the licentious wickedness, and the miserable extirpation of this fanatical horde, were surpassed by what was exhibited in the composition and conduct of another division of the rabble of Europe. From France, from the Rhenish provinces, from Flanders, and from the British islands, there gathered, on the western confines of Germany, one huge mass of the vilest refuse of these nations, amounting to two hundred thousand persons.

Some bands of nobles, with their mounted followers, were not ashamed to accompany their march, and share their prey ; but their leaders are undistinguishable, and the most authentic contemporary records of their proceedings compel us to repeat the incredible assertion, that their movements were guided by a goat and a goose, which were believed to be divinely inspired. The actions of these brutal wretches were as detestable as their superstition was blind and unholy. Under pretence of beginning the Holy War by exterminating the enemies of God in Europe, they let loose their fury on the Jews. The most horrible scenes of murder, rapine, and spoliation marked every step of their course from the Rhine to the Danube. But in the hour of danger they proved as dastardly as they had been ferocious. On crossing the Danube, they were met by a Hungarian army. Struck by a sudden panic, they took to flight ; an unresisted slaughter followed, and so great was the carnage, that the Danube was choked with the bodies of the slain, and its waters were dyed with their blood. The remnant that escaped saved their lives only by flight and dispersion.

The first disasters of the crusades thus swept an immense mass of corruption from the surface of society. The genuine spirit of religious and martial enthusiasm was more slowly evolved. The real hero of the first crusade is Godfrey of Bouillon, a brave and accomplished French knight. His march from the banks of the Moselle was conducted with admirable prudence and order, by the same route which had proved so calamitous to the preceding rabble. The mailed and organized chivalry of Europe now began

to array itself for the mighty contest. Many princely and noble leaders took the cross. Martial conduct and discipline secured them from the disasters of their predecessors, and a respectable force of crusaders was soon collected in Asia Minor, where several large cities fell into their hands. But the Turkish hordes now flocked from all quarters to the standard of the sultan. Immense armies encountered each other in the plains of Asia Minor. The sieges, the battles, and the vicissitudes of this gigantic war must, in a great measure, be passed over in our brief narrative ; we can only relate a few prominent events.

At Antioch, in 1099, the Christians were besieged by two hundred thousand infidels. The miracle of the Holy Lance revived their drooping courage, and saved the city. A priest declared that he had been favored with a revelation of the place where the lance which pierced the side of Jesus Christ was buried. The people followed him ; the earth was dug, the head of a lance was found, and the multitude exclaimed, "A miracle ! a miracle !" An attack on the enemy was immediately resolved upon. The holy lance, carried into the fight, inspired the troops with heroic valor, and the infidels were defeated by the help of another miracle. Three knights, in white garments and shining armor, issued, or seemed to issue, from the hills adjoining the field of battle ; and the papal legate, who bore the holy lance, immediately proclaimed them the martyrs St. George, St. Theodore, and St. Maurice. The tumult of battle allowed no time for doubt or scrutiny ; and the triumph of the crusaders was complete.

In the end of April, 1099, the army of the crusaders reached Jerusalem, forty thousand in number, having lost more than eight hundred and fifty thousand on their march. Thirty-nine days they lay before the city, and on the 7th of June they made a general assault. Battering-rams, towers, and military engines were directed against the walls ; the besieged met the assailants with darts, stones, and the Greek fire. The Christians were repulsed, but a miracle was again employed to revive their courage. At the moment when all appeared to be lost, a knight was seen on Mount Olivet, waving his glittering shield, as a sign for the soldiers to rally and return to the charge. The languishing spirit of enthusiasm was revived, and they renewed the battle with increased animation. At the hour of the day when the Saviour was crucified, a soldier leaped upon the inner wall ; his brother followed ; and Godfrey was the third Christian who stood as a conqueror upon the fortifications of Jerusalem. The banner of the cross now streamed from the wall, the gates were burst open, and the Holy City was taken.

The capture of Jerusalem was disgraced by all the horrid cruelties which might be expected from a horde of fanatics maddened with the excitement of battle. The conquerors put all to the sword without distinction. The Mussulmans fought in the streets for a while, and then fled to their temples and submitted their necks to the slaughter. Arms protected not the brave, nor submission the timid. No age or sex was spared. Infants perished by the same sword that pierced their mothers. The streets were encumbered by heaps of the slain ; and such was the carnage in the mosque of

Omar, that the mutilated carcasses were floated by torrents of blood into the court, and the Christian cavaliers rode in the sanguine tide up to their horses' knees. Seventy thousand persons were massacred; and the Jews were all burnt in their own synagogues. The remainder of the narrative exhibits a contrast of barbarity and piety which strikingly depicts the manners of the age. These triumphant warriors, glutted with slaughter, threw aside their arms yet streaming with blood, and advanced, with naked feet and bended knees, to the sepulchre of the Prince of Peace, sung anthems to that Redeemer who had purchased their salvation by his death, and, while insensible to the calamities of their fellow-creatures, were dissolved in tears for the sufferings of the Messiah. Such are the inconsistencies of human nature.

Godfrey of Bouillon was elected King of Jerusalem. A Christian kingdom was established, and the laws, language, and manners of Europe were planted in Palestine. In vain the Fatimite Caliph Mostali drew out his forces to oppose the crusaders in the field of Ascalon, and in vain the Seljukian Turks withstood them at Antioch. Religious enthusiasm incited the Christians to almost supernatural exertions, and they maintained themselves in their conquest for a period of nearly two centuries. In its largest extent, the Latin kingdom of Palestine spread from the Mediterranean to the desert of Arabia, and from the mountains of Armenia to the confines of Egypt. The lands were parcelled out among the crusaders agreeably to the principles of the feudal system. Sometimes the conquered Mussulmans were allowed to live as tributaries,

but generally the towns were exclusively occupied by the Christians. The mercantile cities of Italy, and the people of the North of Europe coöperated with the crusaders in forming the kingdom. France, Italy, and Germany poured forth their hosts as soon as the Western World had been blessed with the news that the Holy Sepulchre was in the hands of the faithful. The new champions of the cross encountered, but sunk under, the horrors of Asia Minor. The sword of the enemy, famine, and disease swept from the earth more than four hundred thousand of these fanatical adventurers.

Three monastic and military orders, the Hospitalers, the Templars, and the Teutonic Knights, were instituted at Jerusalem to protect the pilgrims from the attacks of the Turks. These institutions were characteristic of an age in which the sacred was so confounded with the profane, that it was thought the virtues of the monk might be combined with the qualities of the soldier. The new orders, loaded with wealth and particular privileges, in a short time became greedy, licentious, and insolent, enemies of one another, and by their mutual hatred weakened the cause of Christianity.

Eight different crusades were set on foot, one after another, and the rage for making war upon the infidels continued for nearly two centuries. But within a century from its foundation the kingdom of Jerusalem began to decline. Incessant attacks by the Mussulmans consumed the resources of the crusaders, and at length the city was captured by Sultan Saladin, in 1187. After this loss the metropolis was established at Acre,

and the kingdom, in a decaying state, was preserved a century longer. In 1291, the Sultan Khalil laid siege to the place, and, on the 18th of May, captured it by assault. Sixty thousand crusaders were killed and made prisoners. The Turks swept all Palestine, and put to death every Christian who could not flee the country. All the churches and fortifications of the Latins were demolished, and, in the language of Gibbon, "A mournful and solitary silence prevailed along the coast which had so long resounded with the WORLD'S DEBATE."

THE TROUBADOURS.

SOUTHERN FRANCE, after having been the inheritance of several of the successors of Charlemagne, was elevated, in 879, to the rank of an independent kingdom. Provence, a portion of this territory, subsequently became celebrated for the origin of the earliest European literature which arose after the decline of the Latin language. The Troubadours of Provence created the first modern poetry, and contributed much toward the formation of the earliest Italian literature. Raymond the Fourth, of Arragon, Count of Provence, a lover of letters, and a skilful critic, about the year 1220, invited to his court the most celebrated of the songsters, who professed to polish and adorn the Provençal language by various sorts of poetry. Charles the First, his son-in-law, and the inheritor of his vir-

tues and dignities, conquered Naples, and carried into Italy a taste for the Provençal literature. Soon afterwards the Roman court was removed to Provence. Hitherto the Latin language only had been in use. The Provençal writings established a common dialect, and their example convinced other nations that the modern languages were no less adapted to composition than those of antiquity. They introduced a love of reading, and diffused a popular taste for poetry, by writing in a language intelligible to the ladies and the people. Their verses, being composed in a familiar tongue, became the chief amusement of princes and feudal lords, whose courts had now begun to assume an air of greater brilliancy. These arts of ingenious entertainment thus became universally fashionable, and imperceptibly laid the foundation of polite literature.

Thousands of poets flourished almost contemporaneously in the Provençal language, who gave it a character of originality which owes nothing to classical literature. The Provençal word, *Trobador*, means an *inventor*. The poetry of the first Troubadours consisted of satires, moral fables, allegories, and sentimental sonnets. As early as the year 1180, a tribunal, called the *Court of Love*, was instituted in Provence, by which questions of gallantry were decided. This institution furnished a perpetual supply of matter for the poets, who threw the claims and arguments of the different parties into verse. The art of the Troubadours went by the name of the *Gay Science*. It was in the twelfth century that their poetry attained its highest perfection. It was essentially lyrical, mostly amorous, and was characterized by simpli-

city, or rather paucity of ideas, and by a strained refinement of expression and peculiarity of form which made it quite distinct from the classical models. In that age and country of chivalry, every noble beauty had in her train some admiring poet, and every poet selected some fair lady, sometimes the daughter, but oftener the wife, of the nobleman to whose retinue he was attached, for the object of his poetical passion, and the subject of his song. It was a poetical attachment, although it sometimes ended in a real one. The Troubadours often sang of loftier themes. Some of them, who had followed the crusaders and shared the dangers of Eastern campaigns, commemorated, after their return, the valiant deeds of the soldiers of the cross. Others, about the time of the persecution of the Albigenses, wrote bitter satires against the persecutors, the Inquisitors, the priesthood, and against Rome itself.

The wildness of the imagination and manners of the Troubadours receives a striking illustration in the history of Geoffrey de Rudel, a Troubadour of the twelfth century. The knights who returned from the Holy Land spoke with enthusiasm of a countess of Tripoli, who had shown them the most generous hospitality, and whose grace and beauty equalled her virtues. Rudel, hearing this account, fell deeply in love with her, although he had never seen her, and prevailed upon one of his friends, also a Troubadour, to accompany him to the Levant. In 1162, he embarked for the Holy Land, but was attacked by a severe illness on the voyage, and had lost the power of speech when he arrived at the port of Tripoli. The countess, being

informed that a celebrated poet was dying of love for her, visited him on shipboard, took him kindly by the hand, and attempted to cheer his spirits. The poet, we are assured, recovered his speech sufficiently to thank the countess for her humanity, and to declare his passion, when his expressions of gratitude were silenced by the convulsions of death. He was buried at Tripoli, beneath a tomb of porphyry, which the countess raised to his memory, with an Arabic inscription. The following are his verses on *Distant Love*, which he composed previous to his voyage.

“ANGRY and sad shall be my way,
If I behold not her afar ;
• And yet I know not when that day
Shall rise, for still she dwells afar.
God ! who hast formed this fair array
Of worlds, and placed my love afar,
Strengthen my heart with hope, I pray,
Of seeing her I love afar.
Though but one blessing may repay
The thousand griefs I feel afar,
No other love shall shed its ray
On me, if not this love afar ;
A brighter one, where’er I stray,
I shall not see, or near or far.”

Rhyme was the groundwork of the Provençal poetry, from whence it passed into the poetry of all the other European nations. This form of verse appears to have been adopted first from the Arabians. The Troubadours improved on the Arabic rhymes, and varied them in a thousand different ways. They crossed and intertwined their verses so that the return

of the rhyme was preserved throughout the whole stanza ; and they relied on their harmonious language, and on the well exercised ears of their auditors, for making the expectation of the rhyme, and its return after many lines, equally productive of pleasure. In this manner they became completely masters of rhyme, and treated it as their own peculiar property. The laws of versification, which the Troubadours discovered, are of very general application. They have been adopted in all the countries of the South, and in most of those of the North of Europe. The structure of the verse, this mechanical part of poetry, is singularly connected, by some secret and mysterious associations, with our feelings and our emotions, and with all that speaks to the imagination and the heart.

Poetry, as we have shown above, became the recreation of the most illustrious men in Europe, immediately after the appearance of the Troubadours in Provence. The amorous monarchs celebrated their mistresses in verse ; and, when the first sovereigns of Europe had thus assumed this rank, there was not a single baron or knight, who did not think it his duty to add to his fame, as a brave and gallant man, the reputation of a gentle Troubadour. To these poetical pursuits nothing more was necessary than a quick perception of the musical and harmonious. In obedience to this faculty, the words naturally fell into the order most agreeable to the ear, and the thoughts, the images, and the sentiments acquired that general accordance and melodious congruity which seem to proceed from the soul, and to which study can add nothing. We are struck with surprise at observing what

very slight traces of learning are displayed in the poetry of the Troubadours. No allusion to history or mythology, no comparisons borrowed from foreign manners, no reference to the sciences, or the learning of the schools, are mingled with their simple effusions of sentiment. This fact enables us to comprehend how it was possible for princes and knights, who were often unable to read, to be ranked among the most ingenious Troubadours.

The martial songs of the Troubadours afford instances of the most lively and powerful inspiration. The following is by Guillaume de St. Gregory.

“THE beautiful spring delights me well,
When flowers and leaves are growing ;
And it pleases my heart to hear the swell
Of the birds' sweet chorus flowing,
In the echoing wood ;
And I love to see, all scattered around,
Pavilions and tents on the martial ground ;
And my spirit finds it good
To see, on the level plains beyond,
Gay knights and steeds caparison'd.

“It pleases me when the lancers bold
Set men and armies flying ;
And it pleases me, too, to hear around
The voice of the soldiers crying :
And joy is mine
When the castles strong, besieged, shake,
And walls uprooted totter and quake,
And I see the foemen join
On the moated shore, all compassed round
With the palisade and guarded mound.

“ Lances, and swords, and stained helmets,
And shields dismantled and broken,
On the verge of the bloody battle-scene,
The field of wrath betoken ;
And the vassals are there,
And there fly the steeds of the dying and dead :
And where the mingled strife is spread,
The noblest warrior's care
Is to cleave the foeman's limbs and head,
The conqueror less of the living than dead.

“ I tell you that nothing my soul can cheer,
Or banqueting or reposing,
Like the onset cry of ‘ Charge them ! ’ rung
From each side, as in battle closing :
Where the horses neigh,
And the call to ‘ Aid ! ’ is echoing loud,
And there on the earth the lowly and proud
In the fosse together lie,
And yonder is piled the mingled heap
Of the brave that scaled the trench's steep.

“ Barons ! your castles in safety place,
Your cities and villages too,
Before ye haste to the battle scene ;
And, page, now quickly go,
And tell the lord of ‘ Yes and No,’ *
That peace already too long hath been ! ”

The high reputation of the Provençal poets, and the rapid decline of their language, are two phenomena equally striking in the history of the cultivation of the human mind. All at once the voice of the Troubadours became silent ; the Provençal language was abandoned, and, undergoing new changes, again be-

* Richard Cœur de Lion.

came a mere dialect, till, after a brilliant existence of three centuries, its productions were ranked among those of the dead languages. That literature which has given models to other nations has not produced, among its abundance of agreeable poems, a single master-piece, or a work of high genius, destined to immortality. It was entirely the offspring of the age, and not of individuals. Had Dante been born in Provence ; had he boldly united in one great poem all the high mythology of Catholicism, with the sentiments, the interests, and the passions of a knight, a statesman, and a crusader, he would have opened a mine of riches unknown to his contemporaries. By his sole influence, the Provençal language might still have been in existence, the most cultivated, as well as the most ancient language of Southern Europe. But no Dante arose in Provence, and the poetry of that country merely reveals to us the imagination and the spirit of the modern nations in their infancy. It exhibits what was common to all and pervaded all ; and not what genius, superior to the age, enabled a single individual to accomplish. It had no resources except such as were within itself, no classical allusions, no mythology, either native or borrowed, nor even a romantic imagination. It was a beautiful flower springing up on a sterile soil ; nor could any cultivation avail it, in the absence of its natural nourishment.



THE JACQUERIE.

THE middle of the fourteenth century was one of the most calamitous periods in the French annals. There was hardly any affliction or disgrace which did not fall upon the kingdom during those disastrous times. Edward the Third, of England, had carried his arms into the heart of France. King John was made a prisoner, and the army of the French overthrown at the battle of Poitiers. The capital was in a state of sedition. A traitorous prince of the blood was in arms against the sovereign authority. Famine, the certain and terrible companion of war, for several years desolated the country. In 1348, the great plague, the most extensive and unsparing recorded in history, visited France as well as the rest of Europe, and consummated the work of hunger and the sword. To these calamities we must add the *Jacquerie*, or insurrection of the French peasantry, which seemed to fill the cup of woes to the brim, and was marked by all the circumstances of horror incident to the sudden rising of an exasperated and ignorant populace.

The companies of adventurers, or mercenary troops, in the French and English service, finding no immediate occupation during the truce between the two countries, scattered themselves over France in search of pillage. No force existed sufficiently powerful to check these robbers in their career. Unswayed by superstition, they compelled the Pope to ransom himself, in Avignon, by the payment of forty thousand crowns. France continued to be the passive victim

of their violence, even after the pacification was concluded with England, till some were diverted into Italy, and others led by Du Guesclin to the wars of Castile. Impatient of these sufferings, the peasants, formerly oppressed by their lords, and now left unprotected by them, grew desperate, and, rising everywhere in arms, carried the disorders to the last extremity. The wild state of nature seemed to be renewed in the bosom of society; every man was thrown loose and independent of his fellow-citizens, and the whole populace of France was in a state of furious insurrection. This is commemorated in history by the name of the *Jacquerie*, from the title of *Bon Homme Jacques*, or *Good Man Jacques*, commonly applied to the peasantry.

This insurrection first broke out in 1358, at Beauvoisis in Brie upon the Marne. At first, it was nothing more than a disorderly troop of about a hundred persons, without any leader, who, after discussing their grievances, began to declaim against the nobles of the kingdom, the knights and squires, by whom they felt oppressed. Murmurs of revenge were heard, and at length a voice arose, declaring that it would be a meritorious act to destroy them all. To this declaration a general assent was given; and all the persons present, encouraging each other to violent measures, immediately ran to such arms as they could seize, which were, in general, nothing more than knives, and sticks shod with iron; marched tumultuously to the house of a knight in the neighbourhood, broke it open, murdered him and all his family, and burnt the house. They next attacked the castle of another knight, cap-

tured and destroyed it, murdering all the inmates under circumstances of the greatest atrocity. In a short time, their numbers increased to six thousand persons, who spread themselves in every quarter, burning, plundering, and murdering all before them. The better sort of people abandoned their dwellings and fled for their lives. Consternation prevailed throughout the country. The multitudes of the insurgents increased everywhere in their onward movements, and before long they amounted to a hundred thousand.

“This infuriated rabble,” as Froissart says, “plundered and burnt all the houses in their march, murdered every gentleman, and violated every lady and damsel they could find. He who committed the most atrocious actions, and such as no human creature would have imagined, was the most applauded, and considered as the greatest man among them. I dare not write the horrible and inconceivable atrocities they committed. When asked, for what reason they acted so wickedly, they replied, they knew not, but did so because they saw others do the same ; and they thought that by this means they should destroy all the nobles and gentlemen in the world.”

A body of nine thousand of these savage boors broke into the city of Meaux, where the wife of the Dauphin, the Duchess of Orleans, and above three hundred other ladies had taken shelter. The most horrible enormities were about to be committed, and the unfortunate fugitives gave themselves up for lost. They had no defence against this ferocious mob, except sixty knights led by the Count de Foix and the Captal de Buch. But these gallant knights, animated by the

true spirit of chivalry, advanced boldly to the gates of the market-place, where the ladies were lodged, and fell upon the tumultuous rabble, who, struck with a panic at this intrepid attack from a handful of men, gave way and fled in a most disorderly rout. The knights pursued them and drove them from the town with much slaughter. Great numbers were forced into the river, where they were drowned, and their whole loss on that day was not less than seven thousand. On the return of the knights to Meaux, they set fire to the town, where they burnt to death all the peasants of the neighbourhood they could find, because the townspeople and the peasantry had assisted the rioters in their outrages.

After their repulse at Meaux, these banditti began to encounter resistance from other quarters. The gentlemen of Beauvoisis, Corbie, and Vermandois, finding themselves unable, without assistance, to check these increasing violences, had sent for help to their friends in Flanders, Hainault, and Bohemia. Aided by auxiliaries from these countries, they took the field against the common enemy, who, ill-armed, and without discipline or order, could not stand their attacks. These wretches were cut to pieces and dispersed, wherever they were found. All who were taken were hung upon the trees along the roads. The king of Navarre put to death in one day, near Clermont, upwards of three thousand. An individual, who was called their captain, was taken prisoner and sent to the Dauphin, who, understanding that he had assumed the title of King, caused him to be crowned with an iron trevet heated red hot, and then hanged for his barbarous cruelties.

The deplorable condition of France at this time, and for a considerable period afterward, is strikingly exhibited in a letter of Petrarch, who made a journey to Paris in 1360. "When I beheld the kingdom lying under the desolation of fire and sword, I could hardly persuade myself that it was the same country which I had formerly seen so rich and flourishing. I could recognize nothing. All that met my view was a frightful solitude, the extreme of misery, general desolation, lands run to waste, fields devastated, houses in ruins. Not a building was to be seen, except those defended by fortifications, or enclosed within the walls of cities. Paris was surrounded by heaps of ruin and marks of conflagration. That despoiled and melancholy city appeared still to dread a repetition of the horrors to which it had lately been a prey; and the Seine, in bathing its walls, seemed to weep for its miseries and fear new calamities."



THE HUGUENOTS.

*Henry the Fourth.*

A LONG train of causes prepared the way for the Protestant Reformation, and an acute observer might have seen that a storm was gathering over the Catholic Church in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Old abuses were succeeded by new ones, and the improvidence of Pope Leo the Tenth precipitated the explosion. The boldness, perseverance, and fiery temper of Martin Luther maintained a successful opposition against the authority of the Roman pontiff, and within a few years from the condemnation of the great reformer by a papal bull, in 1520, the Church of Rome had lost Saxony, Hesse, Brunswick, Denmark, Sweden, and a great part of Switzerland.

The first appearance of the reformed religion in France was marked by the most bloody persecution. The parliament of Aix, in Provence, condemned to the flames, as heretics, all the masters of families in the town of Merindol, ordered all the houses to be razed to the ground, and the trees of the neighbouring forest to be rooted up. The execution of this barbarous act exceeded the order. Twenty-two towns and villages fell a prey to the flames, and three thousand persons, without distinction of age or sex, were massacred. This was the signal for the ferocious wars which fanaticism soon after lighted up in the kingdom. From the death of Henry the Second, the court of France was filled with turbulent factions. Catherine de Medicis, the Queen Mother, ambitious, versatile, treacherous, and capable of the blackest crimes, swayed the actions of the imbecile Francis the Second. She made no scruple of committing any wickedness when it was found expedient, and may be said to have breathed the very spirit of Machiavellism. The active authority was in the hands of the Guises, uncles of the young queen, Mary Stuart; but other powerful aspirants for dominion exerted their intrigues to throw the state into confusion, for the sake of their own private interest. All of them used religion as the instrument of faction. Be religion they kindled the civil wars, in which ambition and fanaticism vied with each other in exerting their fiercest rage upon the people.

Under Francis the First, the Protestant religion had spread greatly at court, as well as in the capital and provinces, notwithstanding the royal edicts against it, which were less owing to the zeal of Francis, than

to controlling circumstances. The massacres of Merindol, and the executions which were imprudently multiplied by Henry the Second, irritated, instead of humbling, the spirit of the sect. Some aspired to martyrdom; others mingled with their zeal great ardor for liberty and thirst for revenge. Admiral Coligni and his brothers, D'Andelot and Cardinal Chatillon, nephews of the Grand Constable, men of weight and influence in the kingdom, were firm friends to a reformation, and the Prince of Condé inclined to the same side. Such powerful protectors kept them in courage.

The origin of the term, Huguenot, like that of many other names which spring up in times of party, is uncertain. It is most commonly thought to be a corruption of *Eidgenossen*, the appellation of the Swiss leaguers in their early struggle for liberty. It was applied exclusively to the Protestants of France. The government incessantly harassed them, and, by a most dishonorable policy, tempted them into snares, that pretexts might be obtained for punishing them. Far from correcting the superstitions that had crept into the Catholic worship, new observances still more superstitious were invented. At the corners of the streets were placed images of the Virgin and the Saints with lighted tapers before them. Round these the populace assembled, singing hymns, and forcing passengers to put money into begging-boxes. If a man did not bow to these images, and stop with marks of reverence while the fanatic people were paying this worship, he was insulted, knocked down, and dragged to prison. The Protestants, under these outrages, thirsted for revenge, and only wanted a leader, to break out into

open violence. The first demonstration was the conspiracy of Amboise, in 1560, having for its object to take the government out of the hands of the Guises, who were hated for the double reason of being foreigners and persecutors. The conspiracy was prematurely betrayed, and the Huguenots, flocking from all quarters to the place of rendezvous, were surprised, massacred, or put to death by the executioners.

Such a misfortune could only further inflame a party so numerous and resolute. A general assembly was held at Fontainebleau to deliberate on the exigencies of the state, when Admiral Coligni presented to the king a petition from the Huguenots, demanding the public exercise of their religion, and that their particular meetings might no longer be imputed to them as a crime. He declared that fifty thousand men were ready to sign it. This bold proceeding was not without effect. The persecutions were suspended, and the Huguenots had time to breathe under a shadow of toleration.

Shortly after, Francis the Second died, and was succeeded by his brother, Charles the Ninth, not yet ten years of age. The intrigues of the Queen Mother again plunged the government into troubles, and all hopes of peace were completely dissipated by an accident which revived the religious feuds in their full rage. As the Duke of Guise was travelling through Vassy in Champagne, some of his men insulted a congregation of Protestants, who were attending a sermon in a barn. Seeing a fray beginning, he ran to appease the combatants, and was struck with a stone. His attendants, in a fit of rage, killed about sixty per-

sops. This massacre, which was greatly exaggerated by public report, drove the Huguenots to take up arms. Such was the beginning of the religious wars which threw the whole kingdom into confusion. The Prince of Condé, who put himself at the head of the Protestant party, seized Orleans, Rouen, and other cities and towns. He gave up Havre to Elizabeth of England, in order to obtain her assistance. The French seemed to have lost their national spirit in the heat of their animosities. The whole kingdom was filled with fanatics transported with the hottest rage against each other. The parliament proscribed the Huguenots, and commanded the Catholics to pursue and kill them without fear of being brought to justice. The age of Marius and Sylla appeared to be renewed. Surprisals and massacres occurred every moment, and hardly a town in the kingdom escaped the bloody and horrible scenes of civil war.

Short intervals of peace seemed to promise occasionally a termination of these calamities; but the treaties in favor of the Huguenots were shamefully violated by the stronger party, when it suited their purposes. Deeds of the most profound dissimulation and treachery at length prepared the way for the massacre of St. Bartholomew, one of the foulest transactions that stain the page of French history. The court flattered and cajoled the Protestants in order to bring them into their toils. The perfidious Charles the Ninth invited Admiral Coligni to his court, offered him the command of an army against Spain, and treated him with the greatest respect and affection. Coligni fell into the snare, and was completely won by the frank

demeanour of the young king. He employed his influence to induce other Protestant chiefs to follow his example, and, though repeatedly warned of his danger, his confidence was unshaken. In this deceitful calm, he exclaimed, "Rather than renew the horrors of civil war, I would be dragged a corpse through the streets of Paris."

The court resided then at Blois; but the marriage of Henry, king of Navarre, with Margaret, the sister of Charles, drew it to Paris on the 18th of August, 1572. Coligni, the Prince of Condé, and the most considerable men of the Protestant party, attended without suspicion, and entertained a hope that the marriage of a Protestant king with the king's sister would appease the religious animosities. But at this moment a most diabolical plot was in existence for the total extirpation of the Huguenots by massacre. Condé and the king of Navarre only were to be spared, on condition of changing their religion. Volumes have been written upon the disputed points, of the original projectors of the plot, and the precise share which the king bore in it; but this is not the place for such topics. We can only state the general and well authenticated facts.

The marriage was celebrated with great pomp. Four days were passed in all sorts of festivities. On the fifth, as Coligni was walking home, reading a paper, he was shot by an arquebuse from the upper window of a house occupied by the Duke of Guise. One ball shattered his hand, and another lodged in his right arm. The wounds were declared to be not dangerous; but, on the news of the occurrence, the

Huguenots repaired in crowds to the Admiral's residence, and offered him their services, with menacing language against the Guises, the suspected assassins. The real authors of this deed, however, were the Queen Mother, the Duke of Anjou, and the Duke of Nemours. The attempt having failed, the conspirators met secretly the next morning. After dinner, the Queen Mother was seen to enter the king's chamber; Anjou and some other Catholic lords presently joined her. According to Charles's account of this meeting, as reported by his sister, Margaret, he was there suddenly informed of a treasonable conspiracy of the Huguenots against himself and family; was told that the Admiral and his friends were at that moment plotting his destruction, and that, if he did not promptly anticipate the designs of his enemies, he and his family might be sacrificed. Under this impression, he states that he gave a reluctant and hurried consent to the proposition of his counsellors, exclaiming, as he left the room, that he hoped not a single Huguenot would be left alive to reproach him with the deed. The plan of the massacre had been previously arranged, and the signal was to be given in two hours.

All Paris was tranquil at this moment. Charles, his mother, and Anjou repaired to an open balcony of the Louvre, and awaited the result in breathless silence. This awful suspense was broken by the report of a pistol. Charles shook with horror; his frame trembled; his resolution failed him, and cold drops stood upon his brow. But it was too late to recede; the bell of the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois tolled, and the horrible massacre commenced at two

o'clock in the morning of the 24th of August, 1572, the day of St. Bartholomew. Coligni and his friends were immediately murdered in cold blood, and their remains were treated with brutal indignity. The populace were then called upon to join in the carnage, and protect their religion and their king against Huguenot treason. The leaders galloped through the streets shouting, "Kill! kill!—kill the Huguenots! kill every man of them!—It is the king's orders!" The wretched Protestants were murdered in their beds, or cut down in attempting to escape. The streets and houses streamed with blood. The rage of the murderers spared neither age, sex, nor condition. The king was said to have encouraged the massacre, by firing from the windows of his palace upon the miserable fugitives as they ran along the streets. The affair now took a turn which was not anticipated. Secret revenge and personal hatred embraced that favorable opportunity for gratification, and many Catholics fell by the hands of Catholic assassins. Towards evening, the excesses of the populace became so alarming, that the king, by sound of trumpet, commanded every man to return to his house, under penalty of death, except the officers of the guard and the civil authorities. The next day, he issued another proclamation, declaring that no person, under pain of death, should kill or pillage another, unless duly authorized. It is evident that the massacre was more extensive and indiscriminate than its projectors had anticipated, and that it was necessary to check the disorderly fury of the populace. Yet it was not till the end of the third day that the slaughter ceased. But, in the mean time, orders

had been sent for the perpetration of the same butchery in the provinces, and one hundred thousand victims are computed to have fallen in this diabolical massacre. On the 26th of August, Charles went in state to the parliament of Paris, and avowed himself the author of the whole proceeding, claiming to himself the merit of having thereby given peace to his kingdom. A medal was struck in commemoration of the event, with the inscription, "Piety put the sword into the hand of Justice."

Yet the conduct of Charles is not easily understood. Sully informs us, that, while the massacre was going on, he behaved like one possessed. A few days after, he said to the celebrated Ambrose Paré, his surgeon, and a Huguenot, "I know not how it is, but for the last few days I have felt like one in a fever; my mind and body are both disturbed. Every moment, whether I am asleep or awake, visions of murdered corpses, covered with blood, and hideous to the sight, haunt me. Oh! I wish they had spared the innocent and feeble!" — He died in less than two years after the massacre, in an agony of mental and bodily suffering.

The massacre of St. Bartholomew produced effects entirely the reverse of what had been expected by the Catholics, but exactly such as a knowledge of human nature, and of the principles of religious zeal and enthusiasm, would have anticipated. The Huguenots, instead of being crushed into submission, became more formidable from despair. A thirst for revenge, and an ardent spirit of civil and religious liberty, were kindled all over the country. Civil war burst out again in all its fury. The Protestants assembled in large bodies,

and took refuge in strong places. The king of Navarre and the prince of Condé placed themselves at their head. With the most heroic valor they combated for their religion; and, in these dreadful commotions, such deeds were committed as cannot be remembered without horror. The king of Navarre, by his fortitude, prudence, and policy, at length calmed these agitations. By embracing the Catholic religion, he made his way to the throne of France; and this monarch, Henry the Fourth, secured to his Protestant subjects, by the famous Edict of Nantes, in 1598, a full enjoyment of their civil rights and privileges, without persecution or molestation from any quarter.

But the sufferings of the Huguenots were afterwards renewed under Louis the Fourteenth, when the bishops and Jesuits, who influenced that weak prince, formed a plan to extirpate them by fire and sword, and to ruin, by one mortal blow, the cause of the Reformation in France. The Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685; liberty of conscience was abolished; all the Protestant churches were destroyed; and orders were issued to take their children from them, and place them in the hands of Catholics. The ministers were banished, and all the terrors of military execution were employed to force the others to profess the Catholic religion. Such of these compulsory converts as relapsed were exposed to the most dreadful punishments. Great numbers were put to death, and a price was set on the heads of the rest, who were hunted like wild beasts. By this atrocious persecution, more than half a million of the most useful and industrious inhabitants of France were driven into exile; and the bigoted cruelty and in-

justice of Louis the Fourteenth received their just reward, in the loss of the staple manufactures of his kingdom, which not only declined in France, but were transferred to the dominions of his rivals.

LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH AND HIS TIMES.



Louis the Fourteenth in his Chamber.

THE reign of Louis the Fourteenth has been termed the Augustan age of France. This monarch had none of the commanding qualities which create a nation or an era, and he would not have been distinguished from common princes in common circumstances. Destitute himself of the true sentiment of greatness, he yet

became, fortuitously, the instrument of great deeds, and his reign will always be a memorable period in history. France made great progress under his rule, for which, however, she was no further indebted to him than as he was a general encourager of every thing that could flatter his pride and vanity. He was perpetually told that he was the greatest of all mortals, and he believed it. One of his ablest panegyrists has summed up his character by saying, that, if he was not a great king, he was, at least, a great actor of royalty.

Louis the Fourteenth was born in 1638. On the death of his father, in 1643, he succeeded to the crown, under the regency of his mother, Anne of Austria. France was disturbed by a civil war, and the royal family were obliged to leave the capital, and wander from province to province. The education of the young king was much neglected, and he was kept ignorant of most things useful to a monarch. The lesson most strongly impressed upon him from his childhood was the sentiment of his own importance. Taught by his flatterers that he himself was every thing, and that his subjects were nothing in the comparison, he considered no sacrifice of theirs too great for the promotion of his glory, or the gratification of his desires. Cardinal Mazarin was at first his prime minister; but after his death, in 1661, Louis determined to govern by himself, and that office became vacant. An ignorant young man, whose time had been devoted to amusement, could not, however, really manage the concerns of a great nation; and it was fortunate for him that able officers, in all the departments of state,

had been formed under the preceding administrations. To the genius of Colbert, the great financier, France is indebted for the revival of her commerce, and the splendid establishments of manufactures and the arts which flourished in the early part of this reign. It was he, who, though unlearned himself, yet capable of valuing literature, suggested to Louis that plan of pensioning all the eminent men of letters throughout Europe, which at a very small expense secured to him more erudite adulation than any other prince in modern times has received.

Louis made war upon his neighbours for his own glory and to amuse the ladies of his court. Holland was at that time flourishing by her commerce and colonies, and, with her prosperity, had adopted a character of republican haughtiness. Louis, who could endure no pride in competition with his own, and who viewed the wealth of this country as a tempting prey, found a frivolous pretext for quarrelling with the Dutch. He poured a vast army into Holland, and overran nearly all the country. Amsterdam was saved only by laying the surrounding territory under water. The ambition and rapacity of Louis stirred up coalitions against him, and he was forced to abandon Holland as speedily as he had conquered it. Other wars followed, with Spain, the German Empire, and other powers. Louis, attended by his courtiers, ladies, and all the pomp and luxury of a court, formed several sieges in person, and his generals took care that he should always prove successful. He carried with him historiographers to record his exploits, and every act that flattery could devise was employed to exalt him in his

own estimation and in the eyes of Europe. He received from his subjects the title of “the Great,” which for a considerable time seemed durably attached to his name; but he lived to see it lost among foreigners, and it has finally become obsolete among his own countrymen.

From the palace of St. Cloud one may descry the spire of the abbey of St. Denis, where the kings of France are entombed. Louis could endure the sight of nothing that reminded him of his mortality. He determined upon a residence in another quarter, and Versailles was built, at an expense so enormous, that even Louis himself was alarmed on examining the accounts, and ordered them to be burnt, that the world might never know what monstrous sums had been squandered upon his pleasures. His leading object was always his personal grandeur, and in whatever point any other prince had attained greatness, he resolved to emulate him. Absolute master of a rich and powerful country, he employed all its resources to surpass every competitor in all that could conduce to his own glory. This disposition led to many truly great and useful projects, but, for want of limit and moderation, it defeated its own purposes, and exhausted the means before the end had been attained. If the age of Louis the Fourteenth was that in which the reputation of France for arms, arts, literature, and magnificence stood at its highest pitch, it was also that of its wretchedness and humiliation; and this king ought rather to be regarded as the squanderer of his country’s wealth than as the author of its prosperity. The conceited and egotistical French nation, however, found its own

vanity gratified by the assumed superiority of *le Grand Monarque*, and regarded him with the most profound and servile veneration.

Louis the Fourteenth was a most regular and devout observer of the forms of religion; yet in morals he was far from setting an example of virtue, or even of decency. More than one chapter in the history of France must be occupied by the scandalous chronicle of his mistresses. He seemed to claim the privilege of impudent licentiousness as the exclusive prerogative of the crown. In his expedition through the conquered places of Flanders, he displayed to the eyes of Europe the shameful sight of a king, calling himself "Most Christian," accompanied by his wife and two acknowledged mistresses, sometimes all together in the same carriage, sometimes each in her own vehicle, with the royal guard riding at the side of each. The simple peasantry, unable to conceive the full impudence of crime, imagined that a new law had been framed for the especial pleasure of the monarch, and, running forward to behold the splendid display of concubinage and adultery, asked each other if they had seen "the three queens."

Every species of ostentatious luxury, magnificent palaces and gardens, works of art, shows of pomp and splendor, and infinite sums of money, were lavished upon these favorites. Yet Louis, thus living in the violation of every moral duty, received high praise, because "he never ate meat on a fast day, except when ill, and never was absent a single day from mass, but once, on a very long march." One after another, his mistresses were discarded and new ones assumed,

till at last he fell into the hands of a woman who obtained such an influence over his weak mind as to compel him to make her his wife ; and, in the year 1685, Louis the Fourteenth, the proudest monarch in Europe, secretly married the widow of a buffoon, born in beggary, to whom he had a few years before refused alms. This was Madame de Maintenon, who, though possessing many virtues and accomplishments, had been the wife of Scarron, a gross, vulgar, and licentious man, and so ugly as to be accustomed to say of himself, that "Nature had made him of the scrapings of her pot." This woman almost enslaved Louis, although she was fifty years old at the time of her marriage. She appointed, removed, preferred, or disgraced ministers, and they were obliged to consult her pleasure in every thing.

Thus he who was the terror of Europe, and who seemed to be the absolute master of France, was converted into the easy tool of a talented woman. While, in the fancied exercise of an unfettered will, he issued his commands to obedient millions, he was himself controlled in almost every movement, and, though it is little to his credit, it must be stated that his government was benefited by this course. When he had set himself free from all outward restraints, he was the more sure of having his mind enslaved. He was disturbed by no representative assembly ; he had silenced even the judicial bodies, which, before and after him, manifested a noble independence. The word "people" no man in the dominions would have dared to utter in any other sense than that of "slaves." "I am the state," said he. Dungeons were everywhere provided for the writers who could be so insane as to

utter a syllable of censure on his measures. The torture was used without scruple; the practice of arbitrary imprisonment was applied in the most remorseless manner. He confined a man for many years, whose condemnation by any competent tribunal was never made public, under a horrid artifice which stands alone in the history of human cruelty. We refer to the celebrated "Man in the Iron Mask," of whom Voltaire gives the following account.

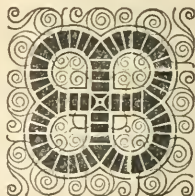
"A short time before the death of Cardinal Mazarin, there happened an event unexampled in the history of the world, and, what is still more surprising, it was not known to any of the historians of that time. An unknown prisoner was carried with the greatest secrecy to the island of St. Marguerite, on the French coast of the Mediterranean; he was a tall young man, with an elegant and noble figure. He wore a mask, the lower parts of which were furnished with steel springs, so as to allow him to eat with the mask on. His guards had orders to kill him, should he discover himself. He remained in the island till 1690, when a confidential officer, named St. Mars, was appointed governor of the Bastile at Paris. This officer transported him from the island to the Bastile, the prisoner constantly wearing his mask. The Marquis de Louvois, the minister of war of Louis the Fourteenth, paid him a visit while in the island, and treated him with a consideration bordering on respect, never sitting down in his presence. This unknown personage was left in the Bastile, and as well accommodated as it was possible to be in that place. Whatever he requested was granted him. He showed a great partiality for lace

and fine linen, and played upon the guitar. His table was served in a superior style, and the governor rarely sat down in his presence. An old physician of the Bastile, who attended him often during illness, affirmed that he never saw his face, though he had often examined his tongue and the rest of his body. This man states that he was extremely well made, with a brownish tint of the skin; the tone of his voice was highly interesting, though he never complained of his situation, and gave no sign to discover who he was.

“This unfortunate person died in 1703, and was buried at night in the parish of St. Paul. What adds to the mystery is, that, at the time he was transported to the island of St. Marguerite, no person of any note disappeared in Europe. The prisoner was, without doubt, a person of consequence, as may be inferred from the following circumstance, which happened shortly after his arrival in that island. The governor commonly placed the dishes on the table before him, and then retired. One day the prisoner wrote something with the point of his knife on a silver plate, and threw it out of the window towards a boat which he saw on the beach near the tower. A fisherman, to whom the boat belonged, picked up the plate and brought it to the governor, who, in great alarm, demanded, ‘Have you read what is written on the plate, or has any one else read it?’ — ‘I cannot read,’ replied the fisherman, ‘I have just picked it up, and nobody has seen it.’ The governor kept him in custody till he had assured himself that all this was true, and then dismissed him, saying, ‘Go, ’t is lucky for you that you cannot read.’

“ Among many persons who knew this singular history, there is one very trustworthy individual still living (1760). M. de Chamillart was the last of the ministry who possessed the knowledge of this strange secret. The second Mareschal de Feuillade, his son-in-law, told me, that, on the death of M. de Chamillart, he begged him on his knees to let him know this mystery of the person who went by the name of the Man in the Iron Mask. M. de Chamillart replied, that it was a secret of state, and that he had taken an oath never to divulge it. Many of my contemporaries are still living to confirm the truth of the above relation. I know of no fact in history better proved or more extraordinary.”

Louis the Fourteenth died in 1715, leaving France in a most unprosperous condition, the finances exhausted, public morals corrupted, and the people oppressed by enormous taxes. He may be said to have laid the foundation of the French Revolution by his prodigality and despotism.



SPAIN.

THE MOORS IN SPAIN.



IN the eighth century, the Gothic conquerors of Spain had so far declined from the valor of their ancestors that they seemed no longer to belong to that warlike and enterprising race which humbled the pride of

Rome, despoiled the Queen of Nations, and penetrated from the Danube to the shores of the Atlantic. Secluded from the rest of the world by the Pyrenean mountains, the successors of Alaric had slumbered in a long peace. The walls of the cities were mouldering into dust, and the youth had abandoned the exercise of arms. The wealthy and fertile kingdom of Spain tempted the ambition and avarice of the victorious Saracens, who had now extended their conquests along the whole northern coast of Africa.

The Spanish historians and the voice of tradition ascribe the first invasion of the Moors to the forcible violation of Florinda by Roderick, the Gothic king of Spain. Florinda, whom the Moors call Cava, was the daughter of Count Julian, one of the king's principal lieutenants, who, when the crime was perpetrated, was engaged in the defence of Ceuta, a town on the African side of the strait. In his indignation at the ingratitude of his sovereign, Count Julian forgot the duties of a Christian and a patriot. He formed an alliance with Musa, the Moorish leader, and invited him to the invasion of Spain. The memory of Florinda became detestable to the Spaniards from this circumstance, and Cervantes informs us that they never bestowed that name upon any human female, but reserved it for their dogs.

The history of this invasion is adorned by the most highly colored romantic fictions, among which we are tempted to select the following. About a mile from the city of Toledo stood an ancient tower, of magnificent structure, though much dilapidated by time. Underneath was a large cave, cut out of the solid rock,

and closed by a massy iron gate with many locks. Above the gate some Greek letters were engraved, which, although abbreviated, and of doubtful meaning, were thus interpreted: "The king who opens this cave, and can discover the wonders, will know many good and evil things." Several of the Spanish sovereigns desired to know the mystery of this tower; but, when they opened the gate, so tremendous a noise arose in the cave, that all were terrified, and some lost their lives. At last, King Don Roderick, led on by his evil fortune, opened the tower. He discovered a spacious and magnificent hall, in the middle of which stood a bronze statue of most ferocious appearance, holding a battle-axe in his hands. With this he struck the floor violently, causing the terrific sounds which had frightened away every other visitant. At the approach of Roderick, the statue ceased his blows, and the king proceeded to examine the wonders of the place. On the left of the statue, he saw written on the wall these words: "Unhappy king! thou hast entered within these walls in an evil hour!" On the right, "By strange nations thou shalt be dispossessed, and thy subjects foully degraded." On the shoulders of the statue he read, "I call upon the Arabs"; and upon his breast, "I do my office." At the entrance of the hall was a round bowl, from which a great noise, like the fall of waters, proceeded. Nothing else was to be seen.

The king, sorrowful, and greatly affected, had scarcely turned to leave the cavern, when the statue recommenced its blows upon the ground. Roderick ordered his attendants not to disclose what they had

seen, and directed that the gate of the cavern should be blocked up with earth, that no memory might remain of so portentous and ill-boding a prodigy. The ensuing midnight, they heard dreadful sounds from the cave, like the noise of a battle, the ground shook with a tremendous roar, and the old tower fell with a terrible crash into a heap of ruins.

In the year 710, an army of five hundred Moors and Arabs, under a leader named Tarif, crossed the strait from Africa and landed at a spot now occupied by the town of Tarifa. They were received in a friendly manner at the castle of Julian, and, after acquiring a rich spoil, returned in safety. In the ensuing spring, a stronger force, of five thousand men, embarked under the command of Tarik, a dauntless and skilful soldier. They landed on that famous rock, which, from the name of their leader, was called Gebel Tarik, or the Mountain of Tarik, now corrupted into Gibraltar. Roderick had slumbered over the first invasion, but he was awakened by the magnitude of the second. He despatched his lieutenant, Edeco, with a body of select troops against the invaders; but the Goths were unable to withstand the martial enthusiasm of the Moslem fanatics. Roderick was aroused to a complete sense of his danger by the defeat of his lieutenant, and took the field in person, at the head of one hundred thousand men. The army of Tarik was increased, by new arrivals from Africa, to twelve thousand Moslems, and to these were joined a promiscuous crowd of Christian malecontents.

About two leagues from Cadiz stood the town of Xeres, destined to be famous for two things, the best wine,

and the most fatal battle in Spain. Here the two armies met in an encounter which was to decide the fate of the Gothic monarchy. Roderick appeared at the head of his troops, encumbered with a flowing robe of gold and silver embroidery, his head crowned with a diadem of pearls, and reclining on a car of ivory drawn by white mules. The battle commenced with slings, darts, javelins, and lances. The combatants then took to their swords; and the shouts and cries of both armies, with the noise of the Moorish drums and Gothic trumpets, seemed to shake the earth. Notwithstanding the intrepidity of the Moslems, they seemed fainting under the weight of multitudes, and the plain of Xeres was overspread with their dead bodies. "My brothers," said Tarik, "the enemy is before you, the sea is behind! Whither would you fly? Follow your general! I am resolved either to lose my life, or trample on the prostrate king of the Visigoths!"

The renewed exertions of the Moslems were seconded in the crisis of the battle by the treachery of Oppas, the archbishop, who suddenly went over to the enemy with a large train of followers. The Goths, struck with panic at this unexpected turn of affairs, gave way, and took to flight. Roderick, seeing the battle lost, leaped from his chariot, and mounted Orelia, the fleetest of his horses. The rout and dispersion of his army were complete. What became of the king never was known. His diadem, his robes, and his steed were found on the banks of the Guadalete, a little stream which skirted the field of battle; but Roderick was never seen afterwards. A belief was cur-

rent among the Spaniards, that he fled to a hermit's cell, concealing his disgrace, and eluding the search of the enemy, in the disguise of an anchorite. It is more probable that he was drowned in the river.

The battle of Xeres put an end to the glory, the name, and the empire of the Goths in Spain. The victorious Musa spread his conquests to the North over Castile and Leon. The terrified cities opened their gates, and surrendered their treasures, on his approach. The celebrated table, of one single solid emerald, encircled with three rows of fine pearls, and supported by three hundred and sixty-five feet of gems and massy gold, acquired by the Goths among the spoils of Rome, was presented by Musa to the sovereign of Damascus. Spain, which, in a mere savage and disorderly state, had resisted, for two centuries, the arms of the Romans, was overrun in a few months by the Moorish conquerors. This kingdom, which had been successively tinctured with Punic, Roman, and Gothic blood, adopted, in a few generations, the institutions and manners of the Arabs. The scanty remnant of the Christians, who rejected their yoke, became almost lost to the view of history. After the disastrous day of Xeres, and the reduction of Seville and Merida, a band of fugitives still cherished the flame of liberty in the Asturian valleys. In a life of poverty and freedom, their former virtues revived ; and, in many a bloody encounter, they asserted against the fanatics of Arabia their descent from the hardy warriors of the North. Amidst their trackless retreats, they preserved with care and affection their ancient laws and customs ; and, under the guidance of Pelagius or Don Pelayo, they at

length achieved such successes as awakened the Moors from the illusion that all resistance to their dominion in Spain was extinguished. The perpetual contests between the two nations from this period down to the overthrow of the Moorish dominion by the conquest of Granada, in the fifteenth century, are dignified by the Spanish historians with the name of a war of seven hundred years.

In the first period of this long struggle, the Arabs carried learning and the arts to a degree of cultivation far beyond any thing known in the Christian parts of Spain. Those wild enthusiasts learned, on the European soil, to estimate the value of civilized life, with a rapidity as astonishing as that which distinguished the social improvement of their brethren whom they had left behind in Asia, under the government of the Caliphs. Before the era of Mohammed, their language had been cultivated and adapted to poetry and eloquence, according to the laws of Oriental taste. In Spain, it soon acquired, even among the conquered Christians, a superiority over the barbarous dialect of the country, which was then governed by no rule. This rude language was soon forgotten in all parts under the Moorish dominion; and the Oriental speech and manners soon began to exercise a strong influence over the independent Christians. The intervals of repose, which formed short links in the chain of their sanguinary conflicts, afforded them some opportunities for the interchange of the arts of peace, and they were soon taught to feel for each other that involuntary respect which the brave can never withhold from brave adversaries.

The Arab, who, in his native deserts, had not been accustomed to impose on women half the despotic restraints to which the sex is subject in the harems of Mohammedan cities, was soon disposed to imitate the gallantry of the descendants of the Goths; and still more readily did the imagination of the Christian knight, in a climate which was far from being ungenial, even to African invaders, acquire an Oriental loftiness. Thus arose the spirit of Spanish knight-hood, which was, in reality, only a particular form of the general chivalrous spirit then prevailing in most of the countries of Europe; but which, under that form, impressed, in an equal degree, on the old European Spaniard an Oriental, and on the Spanish Moor a European, character.

Literature, and the elegant and useful arts, were carried to a high degree of excellence by the Spanish Moors, while the rest of Europe remained sunk in barbarism. The munificence and taste of their sovereigns were most ostentatiously displayed in their public edifices, palaces, mosques, and hospitals, and in the construction of commodious quays, fountains, bridges, and aqueducts, which, penetrating the sides of the mountains, or sweeping on lofty arches across the valleys, rivalled in their proportions the works of ancient Rome. The great mosque of Cordova, now a Christian cathedral, bears testimony, at the present day, to the architectural skill and magnificence of the infidels. This edifice covers more ground than any other church in Christendom. It was completed about the year 800. A thousand columns of the richest marble astonish the spectator, at the first step into

this gorgeous pile. Twenty-four gates of bronze, richly embossed, formerly gave entrance to the Mus-sulman worshipper ; but these have disappeared, as well as the four thousand seven hundred lamps which illuminated it every night. The main entrance had its folding doors covered with plates of gold, and on the highest cupola were three golden balls sustaining a golden pomegranate and lily.

Three miles from Cordova stood another edifice, which offered a still more astonishing display of the magnificence and wealth of the Moorish sovereigns. The palace of Zehra, with its gardens and accompaniments, was constructed by one of the Ommiades for his favorite sultana. The labor of twenty-five years, and fifteen millions of dollars, were expended upon this spot. The artists of Constantinople, and the most skilful sculptors and architects of the age, were employed by his liberal taste in the design and execution of this splendid pile. Twelve hundred columns of beautiful marble adorned the palace. The hall of audience was encrusted with gold and pearls. In the centre of the principal saloon, which was adorned with golden arabesques, and the walls of which were studded with precious stones, was a magnificent alabaster vase, from which issued a fountain of quicksilver, glistening with the blaze of innumerable lamps of crystal.

The royal fortress or palace of the Alhambra, was the pride of Granada, — a city, which, in the days of its glory, could send fifty thousand warriors from its gates, and was surrounded by a wall with one thousand and thirty towers. The Alhambra was sufficiently large to contain forty thousand men ; and its magnificent ruins

form the most interesting object in Spain for the contemplation of the traveller. Its graceful porticos and colonnades, its domes and ceilings, glowing with tints which have lost nothing of their original brilliancy in that pure atmosphere, its airy halls and cooling fountains, show the taste, opulence, and luxury of the builders. Granada, under the Moors, was the great commercial mart of Europe, and its sovereigns were distinguished for their liberality and taste. They freely dispensed their revenues in the protection of letters, the construction of sumptuous public works, and in the display of a courtly pomp unrivalled by any of the princes of that period. Fifty colleges and academies were scattered over the suburbs and populous plains of Granada. The Spanish Arabs emulated their Eastern countrymen in their devotion to science. Their travellers penetrated into the remotest regions of Africa and Asia, transmitting an exact account of their discoveries to the national academies. They contributed to astronomical knowledge by the number and accuracy of their observations, and by the improvement of instruments, and the erection of observatories, of which the noble tower of Seville is one of the earliest examples. The copious catalogues of writers, still extant in the Escorial, show how extensively the cultivation of science was pursued by them. They produced no less than thirteen hundred historical writers, and one of their scholars published one thousand and fifty treatises upon the various topics of ethics, history, law, medicine, &c. Granada, Cordova, Seville, and all the other great cities of the Peninsula, rivalled each other in the magnificence of their schools, colleges, and

academies. Seventy public libraries were open to the Moorish students in Spain, at a time when all the rest of Europe was without science, literature, or cultivation of manners. The dormant energies of Christendom received a strong impulse from the Spanish Moors. Their writings were translated and diffused throughout Europe; the Christians, roused from their lethargy, caught something of the taste and civilization of the infidels, and a healthful action was thus communicated to the European intellect.

During eight centuries of the dominion of the Moors in Spain, they exhibited all the various phases of civilization, from its dawn to its decline. Their constant wars with the Spaniards at length terminated in the conquest of Granada by Ferdinand and Isabella, at the close of the fifteenth century, and the Moorish dominion in Spain was at an end. They were driven from the stately palaces reared by their own hands, wandered as exiles over the lands which still blossomed with the fruits of their industry, and wasted away under persecution, till their very name as a nation was blotted out from the map of history. Under the appellation of Moriscos, they remained subjects of Spain till the reign of Philip the Third, when religious bigotry expelled them from the soil. A few, who preferred death to exile, fled to the mountains, and endeavoured to defend themselves; but they were hunted by their inhuman tyrants like wild beasts; part perished by the sword, part by hunger; their chief was made prisoner, and, after suffering every insult that triumphant tyranny could devise, was publicly executed. By this act of wanton cruelty and injustice, Spain was robbed of four hundred thousand of her most industrious inhabitants.

R U S S I A .

PETER THE GREAT.

RUSSIA is indebted to this sovereign for much of her present greatness. He was a barbarian, but a barbarian who possessed great qualities. He changed the manners, customs, and laws of the empire ; and, though he ruled his subjects with the most arbitrary despotism, he still lives in the memory of the Russians as the *Father of his Country*. The history of his reign offers one of the most singular chapters in the annals of Europe.

He was the third son of the Czar Alexis Michaelovitz, a man of a liberal mind, who had accomplished some reforms and improvements in the political and social condition of the empire. Peter was born at Moscow, on the 11th of June, 1672. On the death of his eldest brother, Feodor, he was nominated to the succession in preference to his brother Iwan, who was set aside for incapacity. Their sister, the princess Sophia, taking umbrage at this, set on foot a mutiny of the Strelitzes or guards, and a revolution took place, accompanied with much bloodshed. Peter's maternal

kindred and all their adherents fell by massacre. Peter narrowly escaped with his life ; he fled, at the commencement of the insurrection, to a convent near Moscow, and was pursued by the Strelitzes, who found him before the altar, and were deterred from striking a fatal blow only by feelings of reverence or superstition. The commotions were at length quieted by an accommodation. Iwan and Peter were proclaimed joint sovereigns. Both were crowned accordingly ; and the Princess Sophia was declared regent, as both the Czars were boys. The schemes of this ambitious princess thus seemed to be fully accomplished.

Notwithstanding Peter's youth, — he being only ten years of age, at the time of the revolution, — he appears to have given some indications of great qualities, which excited the jealousy of his profligate sister, who dreaded lest he might one day prove the ruin of her authority. She accordingly did not scruple to form a plan to corrupt his morals and cripple the energies of his mind. His education was neglected, and he was encouraged in every species of excess and debauchery, by being placed amidst the most profligate companions. But, as a good education can never create a great character, neither can a bad one utterly spoil it. Heroic qualities may be modified, but they cannot be extinguished, by accidents. Peter contracted early habits of intemperance, and coarseness of manners ; his natural violence of temper was augmented, and his health impaired, by his intercourse with these vicious companions ; but his manly spirit was not broken, and he soon showed a disposition to rebel against the control which was exercised over him.

It is a singular fact, that Peter, to whom the Russians are indebted for the creation of their navy, entertained in his youth a most unconquerable antipathy to the water. From the sixth to the fourteenth year of his age, he was so fearful of this element, that he could not look upon so much as a pond or a rivulet without the greatest terror. For this reason he never walked in the garden of the palace, which is watered by the river Moskwa ; nor would he traverse a bridge which crossed the smallest brook, unless the windows of his coach were shut close. This remarkable disposition originated in an accident. When he was about five years old, his mother had him one day asleep in her lap as she was riding in her coach. Passing over a dam where there was a heavy fall of water, the loud noise awaked him in such a fright as threw him into a fever, which, after he recovered, left on his spirits a terror of the water, that nothing apparently could overcome.

With the maturity of his faculties, he grew more and more dissatisfied with the authority of his sister. He married against her will, in his eighteenth year, and claimed a seat at the council board. Violent altercations arose between them. Sophia was ambitious and overbearing, Peter was irascible and stubborn. An open rupture was the consequence. She excluded him from the council, and is said to have formed a conspiracy, in conjunction with Prince Galitzin, against his life or liberty. The chief of the Strelitzes and six hundred others of that body were engaged in the plot, and Peter with difficulty escaped to a monastery. He was there joined by loyal subjects from all quarters,

so that he was soon enabled to seize all the disaffected persons. By force of torture, a confession of the conspiracy was obtained. Sophia was confined for life in a convent, Galitzin was banished to Siberia, and Peter assumed the reins of government in 1689. His brother Iwan never interfered with his authority, and died in 1696.

He immediately began the vast undertaking of reforming the whole system of government and the manners of the people, in which he was opposed by the jealousies of every class of his subjects, who looked upon these changes as subversive of their ancient constitution. Peter's untiring energy, however, overcame all obstacles. He first directed his attention to the army. He entered the ranks as a private soldier, and rose through all the intermediate stages before he obtained a commission. He caused all the young nobles to follow his example. He made the soldiers lay aside their long coats, shave their beards, and dress their hair, and in a very short time he had an army of five thousand men, disciplined and trained on the German plan. He had by much practice conquered his youthful aversion for the water, and, walking one day by the river at Moscow, had his curiosity aroused by the sight of a decayed sloop, of foreign construction, which he was told would sail against the wind. He caused the vessel to be repaired by a Dutch shipwright whom his father had invited into Russia, and took much pleasure in watching her manœuvres. He learned to manage her himself, and soon after had several small vessels built, with which he made excursions on the lake of Perislaw. His partiality for ships increased in

such a manner, that, in 1693, he visited the port of Archangel, and made a short voyage on the White Sea, attended by all the merchant vessels in the harbour. In the following year, he spent several months in similar excursions. His attachment for every thing connected with maritime affairs now grew to a passion, and he resolved to be no longer dependent on foreigners for his ships; accordingly he sent a number of young Russians to Venice, Leghorn, and Holland, to learn the art of ship-building.

In 1694, a war with the Turks opened to him views of aggrandizement on the Black Sea, and the next year he marched with an army to besiege Azof. A naval force was found necessary, and Peter equipped a flotilla with such celerity that he was enabled the year following to defeat the Turkish galleys and capture the place. Of this conquest he was justly proud. He caused his army to make a triumphal entry into Moscow, in which his generals and admirals took the precedence over himself, as the Czar had served only as a volunteer in the campaign.

As his mind expanded, he became more sensible of the barbarism of his vast empire, and of his own deficiency in knowledge to improve and civilize it. He resolved to educate himself by foreign travel, not in the ordinary manner of royal tours, which generally serve but for the gratification of a vague curiosity, but by a residence of some duration in those places which he thought most proper for affording the instruction he wanted. It was an interesting and extraordinary circumstance in the history of mankind, that the despotic monarch of a mighty dominion should descend

from the throne, and travel in the train of his own ambassadors as a private person, rejecting all the pageantry of state, and disdaining no means which appeared necessary to perfect himself in those arts which he thought of essential importance to his country. He began his journey in 1697. The first country in which he made any stay was Holland, taking up his quarters in the admiralty yard at Amsterdam. In the disguise of a Dutch skipper, he went to the famous ship-building town of Saardam, where he worked as a common carpenter and blacksmith, clad and fed like his fellow-laborers. People were strictly prohibited from standing about him or going to gaze at him, — things which gave him great uneasiness. The following year, he visited England, and took lodgings at the navy-yard of Deptford, devoting his time principally to the acquisition of maritime knowledge. The variety of religious sects, both in England and Holland, attracted his notice, and probably gave him those views of the benefits of religious toleration upon which he always acted in his intercourse with foreigners. From England he proceeded to Vienna, for the purpose of studying the military discipline of the Austrians.

His return to Russia was hastened by the news of a formidable rebellion which had broken out among the Strelitzes, fomented by some of the old nobility and clergy, who hated all innovations. A body of eight thousand of this licentious soldiery collected on the borders of Lithuania, and marched towards Moscow, with the intention of placing on the throne the Princess Sophia, who is accused of having secretly instigated their revolt. This attempt, however, was quickly de-

feated by General Gordon, the commander of Peter's troops, who killed and made prisoners nearly all the rebels. Those who were captured suffered the severest punishment. Two thousand of them were hanged, the body of the Strelitzes was broken up, and the very name abolished. New regiments were formed upon the German model ; and the dress and discipline of the rest of Europe were introduced into the Russian army.

Peter proceeded with similar vigor in his other meditated reforms. He altered the calendar by removing the beginning of the year from September to January. In all the lesser manners and customs he introduced alterations, the object of which was to assimilate the Russians to the more polished nations of Europe. In many things he was too precipitate, and in others he did not well understand the peculiar circumstances and character of his subjects. In general, the impatience of his temper and his despotic will led him to look for effects before the causes were duly prepared,—the common fault of arbitrary power. He wished to make his people orderly, polished, and industrious, without giving them either education, property, or freedom. Desiring to raise a magnificent structure, he provided the ornaments before clearing away the rubbish, or laying the foundation. He compelled his nobles to travel into other countries, without preparing them by any previous education, or providing society or occupation for them on their return. He shaved the beards of his barbarians by force, and fancied that they would act, because they looked, like polished men. He did not scruple at reforms which required the aid of the axe and the knout ; and, blinded

with the plenitude of that power to which he trusted for success, he did not perceive, in that abasement which made his slaves kiss the rod with which he struck them, an invincible obstacle to his preposterous ambition of enriching a nation of serfs with the treasures of civilization.

In his war with Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, he at first suffered defeat, owing to the superior discipline of the Swedish troops. But Peter was not a man to be dispirited by a failure, and his perseverance at length enabled him to overthrow his enemy completely at the battle of Pultawa. He conquered Finland in 1713 and 1714. His military enterprises were mostly crowned with success, and large additions were made to his empire by the peace of Neustadt in 1721. He had now attained the summit of his glory. He was requested, and after some hesitation consented, to adopt the titles of "Peter the Great, Emperor of all the Russias, and Father of his Country." This was done amid great rejoicings, which continued for fifteen days. He now turned his undivided attention to the arts of peace. He made canals to unite navigable rivers, encouraged by bounties the manufacture of woollen and linen cloths, the erection of corn, powder, and sawing mills; established a manufactory of small arms, instituted hospitals, established a uniformity of weights and measures, founded an academy of sciences, collected books, pictures, &c.

The most magnificent monument of his reign is the city of St. Petersburg, founded by him in 1703, in a marsh surrounded by forests. A vast number of lives were expended in carrying on the labors necessary for

this gigantic undertaking, amidst innumerable hardships of every sort ; but human life was a trifling object in the consideration of Peter. Nothing could be more arbitrary than the means he took to fill the new capital with inhabitants, one of which was, compelling all the nobility and principal merchants to have houses there. It was peopled, however, chiefly by the foreigners whom he settled in his dominions, and, to this day, foreigners and their descendants make a great part of its population, and have given the tone to its character and appearance. The removal of the metropolis to a corner of this vast empire, at such a distance from the most fertile and populous districts, has been by many considered an impolitic sacrifice made by Peter to his ruling passion. It was, however, powerfully instrumental in civilizing the Russians, by breaking through those national habits of life which were fostered in the barbaric grandeur of Moscow.

Peter married a parish foundling, who afterwards governed Russia as the Empress Catharine the First. By the sweetness of her temper and the charm of her manners, she was able to soften the violence of her husband in the paroxysms of gloomy rage to which he was subject, and she retained her influence over him to the end of his life. By a former marriage he had a son named Alexis, whose history forms a dark chapter in Peter's life, and has left a stain on his memory. The education of this young prince was much neglected, and he grew up ignorant, debauched, and full of vulgar and obstinate prejudice against all his father's improvements. In consequence of his disorderly behaviour, Peter first excluded him from the succession

to the crown, and subsequently brought him to trial for high treason, on a charge of conspiracy to depose his father. A confession was extorted from him, and he was condemned to death. The next day he died in convulsions, and there were suspicions that he had been forced to take poison. The whole of this tragic affair is shrouded in mystery. It is certain that Peter showed little paternal affection, and he punished with extreme barbarity all whom his son named as his confidants.

Peter the Great died on the 28th of January, 1725, in the fifty-third year of his age. He was of a lofty stature, and of a commanding, but coarse and ferocious countenance. His gestures were quick and impatient; his speech fluent and animated. His character was compounded of striking contradictions. Benevolence and humanity were as conspicuous in him as a total disregard of human life. He was at once kind-hearted, and severe even to ferocity. Without education himself, he promoted arts, science, and literature. He gave a polish to his people, and was himself a savage. He taught them the art of war, of which he was himself ignorant. From the sight of a small boat in a river, he created a powerful fleet, and made himself an expert and active shipwright, sailor, pilot, and commander. His manners and tastes were gross and boorish. While in England, he passed his nights either in a pot-house near Tower Hill, regaling himself in low company, with beer and tobacco, or with King William, drinking brandy and pepper.

In 1717, he visited the king of Prussia, at Berlin, with his empress and whole court. A most amusing account of this visit may be found in the *Memoirs of*

the Princess of Bareith, written by herself. "On his first presentation, the Czar took the king by the hand, and told him he was glad to see him ; he then offered to kiss the queen, but she declined the honor. He next presented his son and daughter, and four hundred ladies-in-waiting, the greater part of whom were washewomen and scullions promoted to that nominal dignity. Almost every one of them had an infant, richly dressed, in her arms." The Czar took the princess up in his arms, and in kissing her rubbed the skin off her face with his rough beard, laughing very heartily at the airs with which she resented this familiarity. He was liable, at times, to convulsive starts and spasms, and being seized in this manner when at table, with his knife in his hand, put his hosts into no little bodily terror. He told the queen, however, that he would do her no harm, and took her hand in token of his good humor, but squeezed it so unmercifully that she was obliged to cry out ; at which he laughed again with great violence, and said "her bones were not so well knit as his Catharine's." What pleased him most among the curiosities of Berlin was a piece of antique sculpture, most grossly indecent. He insisted that his wife should kiss this figure, and, when she hesitated, he told her he would cut off her head if she refused. He then begged this piece, and several other things of value, from the king, and packed them off for St. Petersburg without ceremony. In a few days he took his departure, leaving the palace, in which he had been lodged, in a most extraordinary state of filth and dilapidation.

MISCELLANEOUS SKETCHES.

CHIVALRY AND KNIGHT-ERRANTRY.



THE chivalry of the Gothic nations began in the woods of Germany. No youth was then permitted to assume arms, at that time the great privilege of the noble and the free, at his own pleasure. It was made

a social rank, to which it was necessary that the aspiring candidates should be elected in the public councils of their rude commonwealth; and the emulated distinction was then solemnly conferred by the prince, or a kinsman, giving them a javelin and a shield. In these customs we see the origin of knighthood. As the Christian clergy prevailed in Europe, and became a constituent portion of the national councils of every country, they made religion a part of the ceremonial on these elections. They caused an oath to be imposed on the knight. They made the protection of the Church a part of his duty, and extended this to the assistance of the weak and injured; and they gained an influence over his mind by consecrating his sword and belt on the altar. Chivalry, thus improved by its religious ceremonial and obligations, became an important agent in civilizing the fierce and predatory warriors of the Gothic nations. It led their rude minds to make even the warfare they loved a subject for moral discrimination. The actions of the base knight became marked and separated from those of the noble and gallant. One path led to fame, and the other to disgrace. Hence, our savage ancestors, who differed little from banditti, were gradually taught to feel distinction; from honor, an intellectual principle; from courtesy, a social merit; and from moral sensibility, the surest source of human improvement.

This distinction, having once arisen, could not fail to be permanent. It was the interest of the Church to preserve and increase it; for their property was always at the mercy of the depredator. The king found his advantage in maintaining it, because it softened the

turbulence of the baronial character, and gave the law the protection of its bravery. The barons themselves at last perceived the superior safety and comfort which arose from the extinction of the habits of the lawless knight. The fair sex at all times found in honorable chivalry their most effective guardian and avenger. It was, perhaps, their influence that established its predominance in Europe. In their presence, knights delighted to prove their martial prowess, and from their hands received their public honors. The smile of the lady he adored, or professed to extol, became the highest ambition of the sturdy warrior; and her excellence was the topic, not only of his praise, but of his defiance. Her service and her favor were his proudest boast. Gradually, in his festive hours, he imitated her dress. Her gentle manners diffused their magic over his own; and social courtesy, the first herald of the compassionate virtues, became the indispensable accomplishment of the brave and polished chevalier.

Knights were usually persons of birth, but not always so; the lower ranks were sometimes raised to that honor for extraordinary valor. They were qualified for their duty by laboring, running, carrying weights, exposing themselves to the sun and dust, eating rustic food, living in the open air, or in tents, and practising the use of arms. The true merit of a knight is thus stated by a Troubadour: "It is to fight well; to conduct a troop well; to do his exercise well; to ride his horse well; to present himself with a good grace at courts; and to render himself agreeable there." He adds: "Seldom are all these qualities united." This is very probable. To unite martial habits and

vigor with the courteous elegance of polished life could not be often accomplished in a half civilized age. Knighthood was conferred by girding the person with a sword, and striking him a blow over the shoulders with that weapon. In some countries the candidates confessed themselves, and watched all the preceding night in a church; but the fierce Normans thought this too unwarlike. The Spanish knight watched his armor previous to the ceremony. After being dubbed, he went solemnly to church, his sword and belt were placed upon the altar, and prayers were offered. His oath declared his duty to be, "To defend the Church; to attack the perfidious; to venerate the priesthood; to protect the poor from injury; to keep the country quiet; and to shed his blood, and, if necessary, to lose his life, for his brethren."

As they had their duties, so they had their privileges. They were free from taxes, and all other services and burdens, in order, says the authority, "that, being so alleviated, they may instruct themselves in the use of horses and arms, and be apt and ready for action, and the defence of their country." But the great inducements to the occupation were the honor, the donations they frequently received, and the plunder they were always acquiring. It is in vain to suppose, that, before that happy era commenced, in which the greatest man was subjected to the power of the law, the armed force of the country could be kept in peaceful demeanour. But, as the manners of the age softened, they attached themselves to the fair sex. In the earlier state of chivalry, they had neither leisure nor taste for the refinements of love. Their gratifications were then

coarse. War was their passion, and their manners partook of the fierce spirit of the times. Even the ladies were fond of war, and sometimes engaged in it. We read of one who was so skilful in knightly exercises, that she was styled, in masculine phrase, *Le bel Cavalier*. Two Norman ladies quarrelled, Eloisa and Isabella. Each roused her friendly knights to espouse her cause, and plundered and burned the other's possessions. They were both spirited, loquacious, and beautiful, and governed their husbands; but they differed in temper. Eloisa was cunning and persuasive, fierce and parsimonious. Isabella was liberal and courageous, good-humored, merry, and convivial. She rode among the knights, armed like them, and was as dexterous as the rest in the use of her weapons.

The knights travelled with their squires or armor-bearers, and pages. Their state-parade was to march with their shields uncovered, their spears elevated, and a banner before them. If a knight came to a camp with his shield on his neck, and his lance in his hand, it was deemed an act of defiance, for which, if attacked, he had no redress. The shields were highly ornamented with gold and brilliant colors; and some knights placed on them the portrait of their favorite lady. It was the fashion for newly made knights to travel to other countries, to prove their prowess at tournaments against foreign knights. Great chieftains appointed tournaments on purpose that knights might come both to learn and show their martial powers. In great national emergencies, kings invited knights to their courts by profuse liberality. They were the disciplined and effective soldiery of the day. They were

the only portion of the military that was completely armed ; and their skill and power in the use of their weapons made their exertions the common means of victory.

Knight-errantry was a profession brought into existence by the turbulent and disorderly state of Europe in the Middle Ages. At the close of the eleventh century, that quarter of the world exhibited the political anomaly, of countries with governments that were nominally monarchical, infested by a host of petty sovereigns in every part, who were despotic in the territories they occupied, and who acknowledged in the king little else than a titular superiority, and the right of receiving, for a few weeks in the year, their military attendance. These petty sovereigns were the lords or barons, who shared the landed property of the kingdoms. As they had originally acquired their property by the sword, they were obliged to preserve it by the same means. They were perpetually striving to dispossess each other by violence ; and this singular state of aristocratical society made chivalry and knight-errantry both popular and necessary.

Estates are now held by written muniments, and their peaceable possession is guarded and guaranteed by law, easily enforced by the whole executive power of the country. But, in those times, when they were often conferred by the gift of a horn or an arrow, and the monarch had but feeble means to enforce right, or to punish wrong, it is obvious that possession was the great evidence of title ; and he that had strength sufficient to wrest lands from another usually kept his acquisition till superior violence forced it from him. In

this state of society, the services of knights were everywhere wanted by the great proprietors of estates, as well to defend their ancient possessions as to enable the more ambitious to obtain others. Knights, therefore, were perpetually *errant*, or travelling about in quest of adventures or employment; some for the pleasure of the expedition, and some for its expected profits. They often met with the oppressed or unsuccessful, and they cheerfully undertook to redress those wrongs which the laws were too feeble to remedy; and for redressing which, honor, plunder, or rich gifts became their usual compensation.

The petty chieftains of that age were often notorious robbers, plunderers, and cut-throats. Their castles were so many dens of banditti. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the violent spirit of those times. William Rufus permitted his young knights and squires to amuse themselves by plundering the estates of the country people with impunity. A great baron of that period not only laid all the churches near him under contribution, but he also put his own wife into prison and in fetters, to compel her to give up her property. He carried a naked sword under his cloak, and, when the humor seized him, he stabbed, with shouts of laughter, the first person he met. His possessions he daily augmented by the most infamous robberies, and such was his power, and the terror he excited, that this monster was admired and venerated. Robert de Belesme was a noted character of this sort. He took delight in seeing his captives perish; he amused himself with thrusting out the eyes of children with his thumb, and impaling men and women. "The bishops them-

selves," says a contemporary writer, "I blush to say it, yet not all, but many, bound in iron and completely furnished with arms, were accustomed to mount war-horses with the annoyers of their country, to share their prey ; to expose to bonds and torture the knights whom they took in the chance of war, or whom they met full of money ; and, while they themselves were the head and cause of so much wickedness and enormity, they ascribed it to their knights."

It is true, that most of these ministers of cruelty died violently, as "those who live by the sword must perish by the sword." But while such habits lasted, the institution or practice of knight-errantry was an advantage to the community. Unquestionably, many knights-errant considered the benefit of an exploit rather than its morality ; but, while society was in this state of military chaos, there were so many wrongs to redress, that their exertions could not fail to be often on the side of right. There were always tyrant barons to be conquered, captives to be released, ladies to be assisted, and the castles of caitiffs, that defied law, to be taken ; and therefore a knight-errant, with a moderate portion of true chivalry and religious feeling, could easily contrive to unite his interest with his conscience, and relieve, with profit as well as credit to himself, the brave and injured. Knight-errantry, in fact, became a popular and lucrative profession. Till the increasing power of the kings had pervaded every part of the country, and compelled the great to respect the voice of law, and to feel the punishment of offended justice, no class of people could be more valued and useful than these knight adventurers. But, after a

time, the improvement of society having diminished their utility, the institution of knight-errantry disappeared with the evils which it had contributed to remove.

In illustration of the general spirit and manners of chivalry, as exhibited in that portion of Europe most abounding in romantic exploits, we present the following narrative.

On the first day of the year 1431, while the Spanish court was holding its festivities at Medina del Campo, a noble knight, named Sueno de Quiñones, presented himself before the king, John the Second, with a train of nine cavaliers gallantly arrayed, whose lofty demeanour and armorial ensigns showed that they prided themselves on the perfect purity of their Christian descent. The king smiled graciously on the strangers, and, learning from his attendants that they had come to court in order to solicit his patronage, he waved his hand in sign of permission for them to speak. A herald, whom they had brought with them, stepped in front, and in the name of Sueno de Quiñones spoke thus: "It is just and reasonable, that any one, who has been so long in imprisonment as I have been, should desire his liberty, and, as your vassal and subject, I appear before you to state that I have been long bound in service to a noble lady; and, as is well known through heralds, not only in this country, but through foreign lands, every Thursday I am obliged to wear a chain of iron around my neck. But, with the aid of the Apostle James, I have discovered a means of liberation. I and my nine noble friends propose, during the fifteen days that precede and the fifteen days that follow the festival of that

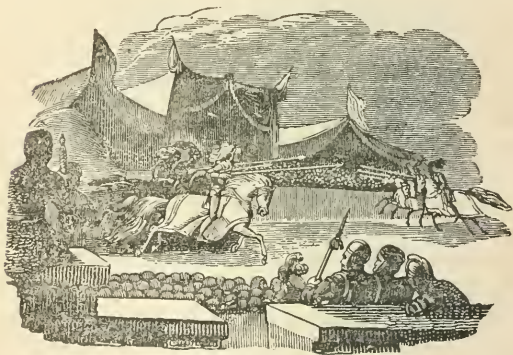
saint, to break three hundred lances with Milan points, in the following manner: Three lances with every knight who shall pass this way on the road to the shrine of the saint. Armor and weapons will be provided in ample store for such cavaliers as shall travel in palmers' weeds. All noble ladies, who shall be on their pilgrimage unattended by a chivalric escort, must be contented to lose their right hand glove, till a knight shall recover it by the valor of his arm." When the herald concluded, the king and his council conferred together, and they soon agreed that the laws of chivalry obliged them to consent to the accomplishing of this emprise of arms. When the royal permission was proclaimed by the heralds, Sueno got a noble knight to take off his helmet, and thus barcheaded approached the throne and humbly thanked the king. He afterwards retired with his nine friends, and having exchanged their heavy armor for silken dresses of festivity, they returned to the hall and joined the dance.

Six months were to elapse before the valiant and amorous Sueno de Quiñones could be delivered from his shackle, and all that time was spent by him and his friends in exercising themselves to the use of the lance, and in providing stores of harness and lances for such knights as would joust with them. The place that was arranged for the contest was the bridge of Orbigo, six hours' ride from Leon, and three from Astorga. The marble effigy of a herald was set up in the road, and by the label in its right hand travellers were acquainted that they had reached the passage of arms. The lists were erected in a beautiful plain formed by nature in a neighbouring wood. Tents for

banqueting and repose were raised and amply furnished by the liberality of Sueno. One tent was admirable for the beauty of its decorations, and more so for its purpose. It contained seven noble ladies, who, at the request of the mother of Sueno, devoted themselves to attend such of the knights as should be wounded in the joust. At the time appointed, Sueno de Quiñones appeared in the lists with his nine companions, all arrayed in the most splendid tourneying harness, the enamored knight himself having about his neck the chain of his mistress, with the motto, which his friends also wore on some part of their armor, '*Il faut délibérer.*' Many stranger knights jousted with him, and his success was generally distinguished.

The fair penitents to the shrine of the saint were stopped, and such as were of noble birth were asked by the king's herald to deliver their gloves. The pride and prerogatives of the sex were offended at this demand; the ladies resisted, as much as words and looks of high disdain could resist, the representative of the king; but they yielded with grace and pleasure, when they were asked to surrender their gloves in the name of the laws of chivalry, of those laws which had been made under their auspices and for their benefit. There was no lack of knights to peril themselves for the recovery of these gloves in the listed plain; and, if the champions of the dames were ever worsted by the hardier sons of chivalry, the gallantry of the judges of the tournament would not permit the ladies to suffer from any want of skill or good fortune in their chosen knights. When the thirty days had expired, it appeared that sixty-eight knights had entered the lists against

Sueno de Quiñones, and in seven hundred and twenty-seven encounters only sixty-six lances had been broken, — a chivalric phrase, expressive either of the actual shivering of lances, or of men being thrown out of their saddles. The judges of the tournament, however, declared that although the number of the lances broken was not equal to the undertaking, yet as such a partial performance of the conditions of the passage of arms had not been the fault of Sueno de Quiñones, they commanded the king-at-arms to take the chain from his neck, and to declare that the emprise had been achieved. Accordingly the chain was removed, and the delivered knight entered Leon in triumph.



THE MIDDLE AGES.



IN the history of mankind every thing is gradual. Society does not receive a new form in a day. The ideas cast abroad in one century become the leading principles of the next; and a revolution, however sudden it may appear, is but the explosion of a train that has been long and curiously laid. We shall endeavour, in a brief sketch, to exhibit the progressive steps by which the political and social institutions of the Middle Ages in Europe were developed and established.

When the fierce and barbarous nations of the North poured down upon the Roman empire, and began to form permanent settlements, they made a partition of the lands in the conquered provinces between themselves and the original possessors. The Burgundians and Visigoths took two thirds of their respective conquests, leaving the remainder to the Roman proprietors. The Vandals in Africa, a more furious race of plunderers, took all the best lands. The Lombards of Italy took a third part of the produce. The Franks in Gaul took the greater portion of the territory, and imposed their name upon the kingdom. It is here that we trace most distinctly the rise and extension of the feudal system. Clovis, the Frankish conqueror, was a leader of barbarians, who respected his valor and the rank which they had given him, but were incapable of servile feelings, and jealous of their common, as well as individual rights. In order to appreciate the extent of his power, we have only to refer to the story of the Vase of Soissons. When the plunder taken in the invasion of Gaul was collected in that city for distribution, he begged for himself a precious vessel belonging to the church of Rheims. The army expressed a willingness to consent. "You shall have nothing here," exclaimed a soldier, striking the vase with his battle-axe, "but what falls to your share by lot." The king dared not express his resentment at the time, but took his revenge a year afterward.

The kingdom of Clovis was divided into a number of districts, each under the government of a Count. The authority of this officer extended over all the inhabitants, as well Franks as natives. It was his duty

to administer justice, to preserve tranquillity, to collect the revenues, and to lead, when required, the free proprietors into the field. The title of Duke implied a higher dignity, and commonly gave authority over several counties. The reigning family was immutable; but, at every vacancy, the heir awaited the confirmation of the people, whether that were a substantial privilege or a mere ceremony. The barbarous conquerors of Gaul and Italy were guided by notions very different from those of Rome, who had imposed her own laws upon all the subjects of her empire. Adhering in general to their ancient customs, without desire of improvement, they left the former inhabitants in unmolested enjoyment of their civil institutions. The name of Gaul or Roman was not entirely lost in that of Frenchman, nor had the separation of the laws ceased till after the time of Charlemagne. In the South of France the Roman jurisprudence survived the revolutions of the Middle Ages.

The essential distinction of ranks in France was founded upon the possession of land or upon civil employment. The aristocracy of wealth preceded that of birth, which, indeed, is still chiefly dependent upon the other for its importance. A Frank of large estate was styled a Noble. If he wasted or was despoiled of his wealth, his descendants fell into the mass of the people, and the new possessor became noble in his stead. In those ages, property did not very frequently change hands and desert the families who had long possessed it. Wealth gave them power, and power gave them preëminence.

The essential principle of a feudal tenure was a mutual contract of support and fidelity. Whatever obligations of service to his lord were laid upon the vassal, corresponding duties of protection were imposed on the lord toward his vassal. If these were transgressed on either side, the one forfeited his land, and the other his seignior, or the right over it. The vassal was bound to serve his lord in war; in battle he was to lend him his horse when dismounted, to adhere to his side while fighting, and to go into captivity as a hostage for him when taken. Forty days was the usual term during which the tenant of a knight's fee was bound to be in the field at his own expense.

Every lord, in those days, having independent jurisdiction, and his own vassals immediately devoted to him, was in fact a petty sovereign, and a few of these in a country were generally an overmatch for the king, and often occasioned the greatest disorders. Hardly ever has there been a government in which there was less provision for the security and happiness of the bulk of the people than in the feudal government. Had not religion, or rather superstition, provided an asylum to a portion of the inhabitants, those times, in which this system was at its height, would have constituted a period of utter anarchy. Thefts, rapine, murders, and disorders prevailed in every kingdom of Europe to a degree almost incredible, and scarcely compatible with the existence of civil society. Every offender sheltered himself under some chieftain who shielded him from justice. Some of this portion of the feudal spirit seems to have lingered in England as late as the time of Shakspeare.

Dary. I grant your Worship that he is a knave, Sir ; but yet God forbid, Sir, but a knave should have some countenance at his friend's request. I have served your Worship truly, Sir, this eight years ; and if I cannot, once or twice in a quarter, bear out a knave against an honest man, I have but a very little credit with your Worship. The knave is mine honest friend, Sir ; therefore, I beseech your Worship, let him be countenanced.

Shallow. Go to. I say he shall have no wrong."

The two grand elements which operated on society from the establishment of the barbarous invaders in Roman Gaul, and which maintained a constant struggle for predominance over the opinions of men from the seventh to the tenth century, were the physical force of the conquerors, and the moral and intellectual force of the clergy. The annals of the Merovingians and the Carolingians are filled with the quarrels and mutual encroachments of the warriors and the ecclesiastics. The one party seized the lands or the treasures of cathedrals and monasteries, and the other took revenge by interdicts and excommunications ; but about the tenth century the triumph of the Church may be considered complete. Its advantages over its rival, from the beginning, were obvious. It was a regular institution, and possessed a formal hierarchy, consecrated forms, a written code, and invariable maxims. It pursued a definite object with order and perseverance. The armed feudality, on the other hand, was but a confused mass of isolated forces, a government without a common object. What it gained by violence it lost by want of system.

Nearly half the territory of Roman Gaul belonged to the monasteries and cathedrals ; in addition to which,

they reaped the tenth of the productions of the other half. Besides the influence of riches, the clergy possessed the influence of superior intelligence. The little knowledge current was confined to them. They alone could read and write. They were necessary in every castle. From the suzerain to the lowest vassal, all had their chaplain to draw up their deeds, to recite the breviary, or enliven the long nights of winter with some tale of chivalry. The Christian faith of the Middle Ages may be considered as a vast Polytheism ; eleven thousand saints were habitually invoked by the people. Before we arrive at the end of the eleventh century, we find that the Church had become the unique source of all social existence. Every thing flowed from it ; the moral and intellectual order of men's ideas was founded on its doctrines ; and nothing existed out of its pale, but brutal and unorganized force. At this period, Europe may be considered a great religious federative republic, governed by a clerical aristocracy, with the Pope for a President.

But the Church itself was destined to undergo its revolution. The Popes first set up their pretensions as spiritual monarchs ; the Church then lost its republican form of government by councils, and assumed an aspect altogether monarchical. As letters began to revive, a source of instruction was opened to the people, which did not flow from the Church, and its authority thus received a blow from which it never recovered. When the clergy ceased to hold despotic sway over the minds of men, the feudal institutions remained, though greatly changed and mutilated. Another form of government arose. The people collected in

towns, and began to be sensible of their force, and to vindicate their rights. Scattered abroad in the fields, or collected in small hamlets, the serfs were the slaves of their masters' will ; but when once they had gathered together in large bodies, and had learned to sympathize with each other, and to act in concert, they disdained the authority of their lords.

The Middle Ages, although they constitute a period of war, violence, and destitution of letters, have been, in general, spoken of in terms of too great disparagement. We owe much to what have been termed the Dark Ages. The human mind was very far from being alike inactive in all the portions of this long period. During the darkest part of it, which extends from the fall of the Western Empire to the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Arabic numerals were introduced into Europe, paper was manufactured from linen, gunpowder and the mariner's compass were discovered. Before the end of this century, oil-painting, printing, engraving, and Gothic architecture closed this series of improvements. These inventions were proofs of mental activity, as well as incitements to it ; and it may even be doubted whether the human mind could have rendered a greater service to the science of the succeeding age, than in thus preparing the soil which it was to cultivate, and constructing new instruments for its use. The government, laws, and manners of the Middle Ages have lately been studied with a diligence due to the investigation of the sources whence has proceeded the diversity of institutions and national character which still prevails in Europe. The literature of the same period has recently almost

everywhere inspired a general curiosity and interest ; and most nations have returned with renewed affection to the earliest monuments of the genius of their forefathers.

The favorite diversions of the higher classes in the Middle Ages, during the intervals of war, were those of hunting and hawking. The former must, in all countries, be a source of pleasure, but it seems to have been enjoyed in moderation by the Greeks and Romans. With the Northern invaders, however, it was rather a predominant appetite than an amusement. It was their pride and their ornament, the theme of their songs, the object of their laws, and the business of their lives. Falconry, unknown, as a diversion, to the ancients, became, from the fourth century, an equally delightful occupation. A knight seldom stirred from his house without a falcon on his wrist, or a greyhound following him ; and on the monuments of those who died anywhere but on the field of battle, it is usual to find the greyhound lying at their feet, or the bird upon their wrists. Nor are the tombs of ladies without their falcon ; for this diversion, being of less danger and fatigue than the chase, was shared by the delicate sex.

About the eighth century, trade was principally carried on by means of fairs, which lasted several days. Charlemagne established many great marts of this sort in France, as did William the Conqueror and his successors in England. The merchants, who frequented these fairs in numerous caravans or companies, employed every art to draw the people together. They were therefore accompanied by jugglers, minstrels,

and buffoons. As but few large towns then existed, no public spectacles or popular amusements were established ; and, as the sedentary pleasures of domestic life and private society were yet unknown, the fair-time was the season for diversion. In proportion as these shows were attended and encouraged, they were heightened with new decorations and improvements ; and the arts of buffoonery, being rendered still more attractive by extending their circle of exhibition, acquired an importance in the eyes of the people. By degrees, the clergy, observing that the entertainments of dancing, music, and mimicry at the fairs turned the minds of the people from religion, proscribed these sports, and excommunicated the performers. But, finding that no regard was paid to their censures, they changed their plan, and took these recreations into their own hands. They turned actors, and, instead of profane mummeries, presented stories taken from holy legends, or the Bible. Such was the origin of the Religious Shows and Mysteries of the Middle Ages, the most singular amusements, perhaps, that ever were known, and which merit a detailed description, in order to exhibit a faithful picture of the manners of the times.

In these most extraordinary performances, the religious ceremonies of the time and the events of sacred history were travestied in so bizarre a style, that we could hardly credit the facts, were they not related in the most circumstantial detail by numerous writers. About the year 990, Theophylact, Patriarch of Constantinople, caused the *Feast of Fools*, and the *Feast of the Ass*, with other religious farces,

to be exhibited in the Greek Church. Beletus, who lived in 1182, mentions the Feast of Fools as celebrated in some places on New Year's day, and in others, on Twelfth day. In France, at different cathedral churches, there was a Bishop or an Archbishop of Fools elected; and, in the churches immediately dependent on the papal see, a Pope of Fools. These mock pontiffs had usually a proper train of ecclesiastics, and one of their ridiculous ceremonies was to shave the Precentor of Fools upon a stage erected before the church, in the presence of the populace, who were amused, during the operation, by his coarse and licentious discourses, and tricks of buffoonery. They were attired in the ridiculous dresses of pantomime players, and, in these grotesque habiliments, entered the church, and performed the sacred service, accompanied by crowds of people in masks, representing monsters, or with their faces smutted to excite laughter. During divine service, they sang vulgar songs in the choir, ate puddings on the corner of the altar, played at dice upon it by the side of the priest while he celebrated mass, incensed it with smoke from old shoes set on fire, and ran capering all over the church. The Bishop or Pope of Fools performed the service habited in pontifical garments, and gave his benediction. When it was concluded, he was seated in an open carriage, and drawn about the town, followed by the crowd, and by a cart filled with dirt, which they threw upon the spectators, to the great glee of all concerned. These licentious festivals were called the *December Liberties*. They were always held about Christmas, and appear to have continued through the chief part of January.

The *Feast of the Ass*, as it was anciently celebrated in France, consisted almost entirely of dramatic shows. It was instituted in honor of Balaam's ass. The clergy walked on Christmas day in procession, dressed to represent the prophets and other Scripture characters. Moses appeared in an alb and cope, with a long beard and a rod. David was clad in green. Balaam, with an enormous pair of spurs, was mounted on a wooden ass, which enclosed a speaker. There were also six Jews and six Gentiles. Among other characters, the poet Virgil was introduced, singing monkish rhymes, as a Gentile prophet, and a translator of the Sibylline oracles. They moved in procession through the church, chanting versicles, and conversing in character on the nativity and kingdom of Christ. Sometimes they performed the miracle of the fiery furnace, with Nebuchadnezzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Sometimes the Feast of the Ass commemorated the flight of the Virgin into Egypt with the infant Jesus. The most beautiful girl that could be procured was selected to represent the Virgin; a pretty child was placed in her arms, and she was mounted on an ass richly caparisoned. The Bishop, with a train of clergy, followed, and they all went in grand procession to church, where the service was performed, with the burden of "*Hin-han ! Hin-han !*" to represent the braying of an ass. The Archbishop of Sens composed a missal for this ceremony, containing, among other strange things, a hymn in praise of the ass, from which we extract the two following verses.

" From the country of the East
Came this strong and handsome beast,

This able Ass, beyond compare,
Heavy loads and packs to bear.

Huzza ! Seigneur Ass, Huzza !

“ Amen bray, most honored Ass,
Sated now with grain and grass ;
Amen repeat, Amen reply,
And disregard antiquity.

Huzza ! Seigneur Ass, Huzza ! ”

This was sung in the most discordant manner possible. The service lasted all night and part of the next day, and constituted the most ridiculous medley imaginable. A liberal use of wine was not wanting on the occasion, and both clergy and laity danced round the animal, and strove to imitate his braying.

The Mysteries, or sacred plays, were acted on a stage consisting of three platforms, one above another. On the uppermost sat God the Father, surrounded by his angels. On the second story were the glorified saints ; and on the lowest, men who had not yet passed from this life. On one side of the lowest platform was the resemblance of a dark, pitchy cavern, whence issued flames ; and when it was necessary, the audience were treated with hideous yellings and noises, in imitation of the cries of the damned. From this yawning cave the devils ascended, to delight and edify the spectators. The Mysteries were usually acted in churches or chapels, on temporary scaffolds, and the performers were chiefly of the clergy. In the Coventry Mysteries, the story of Adam and Eve was represented in the genuine natural costume, and this extraordinary spectacle was beheld by a numerous company of both sexes with perfect composure. They had the

authority of Scripture for such a representation, and they gave matters just as they found them in the third chapter of Genesis. The present age rejects, as monstrously gross and indelicate, those free compositions which our ancestors not only countenanced but admired; yet the morals of that age were as strict, to say the least, as our own. Those people were strangers, indeed, to delicacy of taste; they beheld the broad and faithful delineations of nature, and thought no harm. The present age has gained in refinement of manners and external decorum, but has probably lost as much in real purity of morals.

It remains to add a few words respecting the modes of dress and architecture during the Middle Ages. Much diversity existed in these matters, in the different countries of Europe. Italy and Provence made the first rapid transition from simplicity to refinement. As early as the beginning of the fourteenth century, luxury had made great progress. Previous to this time, the manners of the Italians were rude. A man and his wife ate from the same plate. There were no wooden-handled knives, nor more than one or two drinking-cups, in a house. Candles of wax or tallow were unknown, and a servant held a torch during supper. The clothes of men were of leather, unlined; scarcely any ornament was seen on their dress. The common pride of men was, to be well provided with arms and horses; that of the nobility, to have lofty towers, of which all the cities in Italy were full. The conquest of Naples, by Charles of Anjou, in 1266, seems to have been the epoch of increasing luxury throughout Italy. His Provençal knights, with their

plumed helmets and golden collars, the chariot of his queen, covered with blue velvet and sprinkled with lilies of gold, astonished the citizens of Naples. Provence had enjoyed a long tranquillity, the natural source of luxurious magnificence ; and Italy, now liberated from the yoke of the German emperors, soon reaped the same fruit of a condition more easy and peaceful than had been her lot for several ages.

In England, great rudeness in manners and dress prevailed before the Norman Conquest ; but that revolution introduced, by degrees, the improvements and luxuries of the Continent. An English beau of the fourteenth century wore enormously long pointed shoes, with gold chains from the points fastened up to his knees ; hose of one color on one leg, and of a different color on the other ; short inexpressibles reaching but half way down to the knees ; a coat one half white, and the other half black or blue ; a long beard ; a silk hood buttoned under his chin, embroidered with grotesque figures of animals, dancing men, &c. Similar dresses were also worn in France and Italy. The pointed shoe continued in use till a very late period, and at one time it was fashionable to shape the upper parts into the form of a church window. Chaucer's spruce parish clerk had

“ Poules windowes corven on his shoos.”

In spite of the bulls of popes, the decrees of councils, and the declamations of the clergy, all which were put in requisition to condemn this absurd fashion, it lasted for three centuries.

It is to the Middle Ages that we are indebted for

some of the most imposing specimens of architecture now existing in Europe ; the cathedrals and the castles ; yet domestic architecture made but a slow progress. The houses of the common people in England are described as “ mere sticks and dirt,” as late as the sixteenth century. Even in Italy, where, from the size of the cities, and the social refinement of the inhabitants, greater elegance and splendor in buildings were justly to be expected, the domestic architecture of the Middle Ages did not attain any perfection. In many towns the houses were covered with thatch, and suffered, consequently, from destructive fires. We may guess from this, how mean were the habitations in less polished parts of Europe. The two most essential improvements in architecture during this period, one of which had been missed by the sagacity of Greece and Rome, were chimneys and glass windows. Nothing, apparently, can be more simple than a chimney, yet the wisdom of ancient times had been content to let the smoke escape by an aperture in the centre of the roof ; and a discovery, of which Vitruvius had not even a glimpse, was made by some forgotten semi-barbarian. The first mention of chimneys is about the middle of the fourteenth century, when they were known in Italy and England. In France they did not come into common use till three hundred years later. Glass was probably not employed in domestic architecture in France and England before the fourteenth century ; nor were glazed windows in general use during any part of the Middle Ages.

The Middle Ages are commonly regarded as comprising about one thousand years, from the invasion of

France by Clovis, to the irruption of the French under Charles the Eighth into Italy, at the close of the fifteenth century. This period, considered as to the state of society, has been esteemed dark through ignorance, and barbarous from poverty and want of refinement. And, although this character is much less applicable to the last two centuries of the period than to those which preceded its commencement, yet we cannot expect to feel, with regard to ages, at best but imperfectly civilized, and slowly progressive, that interest which attends a more perfect development of human capacities, and more brilliant advances in improvement. The first moiety, indeed, of these ten centuries, is almost absolutely barren, and presents little but a catalogue of evils. The subversion of the Roman empire, and the devastation of its provinces by barbarous nations, either immediately preceded, or were coincident with, the commencement of the middle period. We begin in darkness and calamity, and though the shadows become fainter as we advance, yet we break off our pursuit as the morning breathes upon us, and the twilight reddens into the lustre of day.

FALL OF THE GREEK EMPIRE.

THE last great event of the Middle Ages was the extinction of the Eastern Empire by the capture of Constantinople. That event seems to have been providentially delayed till Italy was ripe to nourish the

scattered seeds of literature, that would have perished a few ages earlier in the common catastrophe. From the commencement of the fifteenth century, even the national pride of Greece could not blind her to the signs of approaching ruin. From the time that Michael Palæologus drove the Latins out of Constantinople in 1261, the empire, which had been reduced to a state of debility before the crusades, being equally exposed to the depredations of the Christians and the Turks, preserved only a high-sounding name, while it tottered on the brink of destruction. The monastic spirit seemed to quench the last glimmering rays of common sense. Narrow, superstitious ideas directed the measures of government, while they did not check the course of heinous crimes. Andronicus, the son of Palæologus, suffered himself to be persuaded that the Greek empire was under the peculiar protection of Heaven, and, therefore, a fleet was unnecessary for its defence. For this reason, the country was first ravaged by pirates, and then overrun by the Turks. In the fourteenth century, they crossed the straits into Europe, took Adrianople, and spread universal terror.

The Sultan Amurath, who achieved this conquest, established the janizaries on the same footing as that on which they existed down to the present century. His son Bajazet, surnamed Ilderim, the Thunderer, was still more formidable. Conquerors seldom degenerate, till they reap in peace the delicious fruits of their conquests. The whole Greek empire was reduced to little more than the precincts of Constantinople, yet discord prevailed in it. The Genoese fomented these dissensions, and, by means of their fleet, were become

masters of the trade, and even of part of the city. The Emperor Andronicus undertook to fortify Constantinople, but Bajazet sent him orders to demolish his works, and was obeyed, — a presage of unavoidable and speedy ruin. The Christian princes were alarmed by the progress of the Turks; but it was no longer possible to inspire the European republics, distracted by wars, and restrained by calculating policy, with the generous fanaticism of the crusades; and at the Council of Florence, in 1439, the court and church of Constantinople had the mortification of sacrificing their long cherished faith, without experiencing any sensible return of protection or security. Their city was besieged by the Turks, and the Emperor Manuel Palæologus purchased a show of peace by an annual tribute of ten thousand pieces of gold, and a permission for the Turks to build a mosque and establish a *cadi* to administer justice, for the benefit of such of their nation as resided in Constantinople.

Mahomet the Second, by whose arms the last fatal blow was struck at the Greek empire, has been painted in different colors by his panegyrists and his enemies. He was unjust and cruel, like most conquerors, but he showed an elevation of soul and a degree of intellect which made some amends for these vices. He was a scholar, yet not redeemed from barbarism. With some taste for the liberal arts, or, at least, some sense of the value of their productions, he entertained a general contempt for their professors. He was a warrior and a politician in the most extensive meaning of the words, and as such he was truly great. His early life was marked by two instances of uncommon mod-

eration, in suffering his father to leave his retirement and again ascend the throne. Whether we consider the conception or the execution of his enterprises, we shall find equal cause to admire the extent of his understanding and the vigor of his spirit. At the head of a powerful army, and inflamed by the ambition of conquest, he meditated the great design of subjugating that magnificent city, which was now the only remnant of the empire of Constantine the Great.

The Emperor John Palæologus was succeeded in 1449 by his son Constantine, a prince of courage, but whose capacity was unequal to the emergencies of the time, and who was destined to be the last monarch of his line. Aware of the designs of Mahomet, he took care to strengthen the fortifications of his capital, and he made many advances to the sultan in order to induce him to lay aside his project. But Mahomet's resolution was unalterably fixed, and his whole soul was absorbed in the design of making Constantinople the seat of his empire. If he sometimes appeared to listen to terms of accommodation, it was only that he might lull his enemy into security, while he carried on his military preparations with an unwearied assiduity. Early in 1452 he built a strong fortress on the Bosphorus, which the Greeks beheld with dismay. As yet the two nations were not at open war, but Constantine could not shut his eyes to the danger now directly impending over him; and he vainly strove by flattery and gifts to soften his implacable foe, who sought every occasion for a rupture. Hostilities could not long be deferred. The horses of the Turkish cavalry were turned into the cornfields of the Greeks, and, in a tu-

multuous quarrel which this occasioned, several of both nations were slain. Mahomet, with eager joy, seized at once upon this pretext for a quarrel. A massacre of the Greek peasantry ensued, and the two nations were at war. Constantine saw that the last great struggle had arrived ; but Mahomet, to strike the decisive blow with more effect, deferred the siege of Constantinople till the ensuing spring.

The Greeks and the Turks passed an anxious winter. The former were kept awake by their fears, the latter by their hopes ; both, by the preparations of defence and attack ; and the two monarchs, who had the most to lose or gain, were the most deeply affected by the national sentiment. In Mahomet, that sentiment was inflamed by the ardor of his youth and temper ; he amused his leisure with building, at Adrianople, the lofty palace of Jehan Numa (the watch-tower of the world), but his serious thoughts were constantly bent on the conquest of the city of Cæsar. At the dead of night, he started from his bed, and commanded the instant attendance of his prime vizier. The message, the hour, and his own situation alarmed the guilty conscience of the officer, who had possessed the confidence, and advised the restoration, of Amurath, the father of Mahomet. On receiving the royal mandate, he embraced, perhaps for the last time, his wife and children, filled a cup with pieces of gold, hastened to the palace, adored the sultan, and offered, according to the Oriental custom, the slight tribute of his duty and gratitude. “It is not my wish,” said Mahomet, “to resume my gifts, but rather to heap and multiply them on thy head ; in my turn, I ask a present

far more valuable and important, — Constantinople.” As soon as the vizier had recovered from his surprise, he replied, “The God, who has already given thee so large a portion of the Roman empire, will not deny the remnant and the capital. His providence and thy power assure thy success ; and myself, with the rest of thy faithful slaves, will sacrifice our lives and fortunes.” “Lala” (or preceptor), continued the sultan, “do you see this pillow ? all night, in my agitation, I have pulled it on the one side and on the other ; I have risen from my bed ; again have I laid down, yet sleep has not visited these weary eyes. Beware of the gold and silver of the Romans ; in arms we are superior ; and, with the aid of God, and the prayers of the Prophet, we shall speedily become masters of Constantinople.”

To sound the disposition of his soldiers, Mahomet often wandered through the streets alone and in disguise ; and it was fatal to discover the sultan when he wished to escape from the vulgar eye. His hours were spent in delineating the plan of the hostile city ; in debating, with his generals and engineers, on what spot he should erect his batteries, on which side he should assault the walls, where he should spring his mines, to what place he should apply his scaling-ladders ; and the exercise of the day repeated and proved the lucubrations of the night.

Among the implements of destruction, he studied with peculiar care the recent and important discovery of gunpowder, and his artillery surpassed whatever had yet appeared in the world. A founder of cannon, a Dane, or Hungarian, named Urban, who had been

almost starved in the Greek service, deserted to the Moslems, and was liberally entertained by the sultan. Mahomet was satisfied with the answer to his first question, which he eagerly pressed on the artist, "Am I able to cast a cannon capable of throwing a ball or stone of sufficient size to batter the walls of Constantinople?" "I am not ignorant," the artist replied, "of their strength, but, were they more solid than those of Babylon, I could oppose an engine of superior power; the position and management of that engine must be left to your engineers." On this assurance a foundery was established at Adrianople, the metal was prepared, and, at the end of three months, Urban produced a piece of brass ordnance of stupendous and almost incredible magnitude; it being capable of throwing a stone bullet weighing above six hundred pounds. A vacant place before the new palace was chosen for the first experiment; but, to prevent the sudden and mischievous effects of astonishment and fear, a proclamation was issued, that the cannon would be discharged the ensuing day. The explosion was felt or heard in the circuit of a hundred furlongs; the ball was driven above a mile, and on the spot where it fell it buried itself a fathom deep in the ground. For the conveyance of this destructive engine, a frame or carriage of thirty wagons was linked together, and drawn by a team of sixty oxen; two hundred men on both sides were stationed to poise and support the rolling weight; two hundred and fifty workmen marched before to smooth the way and prepare the bridges; and near two months were employed in a laborious journey of one hundred and fifty miles. This enormous engine was flanked

by two cannon of almost equal magnitude; the long order of the Turkish artillery was pointed against the walls; fourteen batteries thundered at once on the most accessible places, and of one of these it is stated that it discharged one hundred and thirty balls. Yet, in the power and activity of the sultan, we may discern the infancy of the new science. Under a master who counted the moments, the great cannon could be loaded and fired no more than seven times in one day. The heated metal unfortunately burst, several workmen were destroyed, and the skill of an artist was admired, who found a way to prevent the danger of a recurrence of the accident, by pouring oil, after each discharge, into the mouth of the cannon.

The first random shots were productive of more sound than execution, and it was by the advice of a Christian, that the engineers were taught to level their aim against the two opposite sides of the salient angles of a bastion. The weight and repetition of the fire made some impression on the walls, and the Turks, pushing their approaches to the edge of the ditch, attempted to fill the enormous chasm, and to build a road to the assault. Innumerable fascines, and hogsheads, and trunks of trees, were heaped on each other, and such was the impetuosity of the throng, that the foremost and the weakest were pushed headlong down the precipice, and instantly buried under the accumulated mass. To fill the ditch was the toil of the besiegers; to clear away the rubbish was the safety of the besieged, and, after a long and bloody conflict, the work that had been performed in the day was demolished in the night.

Mahomet's next resource was the expedient of mining ; but the soil was rocky ; in every attempt he was stopped and undermined by the Christian engineers ; nor had the art been yet invented, of replenishing those subterraneous passages with gunpowder, and blowing whole towns and cities into the air. A circumstance that distinguished the siege of Constantinople is the union of the ancient and modern artillery. The cannon were intermingled with the mechanical engines for casting stones and darts ; the bullet and the battering-ram were directed against the same walls ; nor had the discovery of gunpowder superseded the use of the Greek fire. A wooden turret of the largest size was advanced on rollers ; this portable magazine of ammunition and fascines was protected by a threefold covering of bull's hides ; and incessant volleys were securely discharged from the loop-holes. In the front, three doors were contrived for the alternate sally and retreat of the soldiers and workmen. They ascended by a staircase to the upper platform, and as high as the level of that platform a scaling-ladder could be raised by pulleys, to form a bridge and grapple with the adverse rampart. By these various arts of annoyance, some as new as they were fatal to the Greeks, the tower of St. Romanus was at length overturned. After a severe struggle, the Turks were repulsed from the breach, and interrupted by darkness ; but they trusted, that, with the return of light, they should renew the attack with fresh vigor and decisive success. Of this pause of action, this interval of hope, each moment was improved by the activity of the emperor, and Giustiniani, the commander of a body of Genoese,

who passed the night on the spot, and urged the labors which involved the safety of the city. At the dawn of day, the impatient sultan perceived, with astonishment and grief, that his wooden turret had been reduced to ashes; the ditch was cleared and restored, and the tower of St. Romanus was again strong and entire. He deplored the failure of his design, and uttered a profane exclamation, that the word of the thirty-seven thousand prophets should not have compelled him to believe that such a work, in so short a time, could have been accomplished by the infidels.

The reduction of the city appeared to be hopeless, unless a double attack could be made, from the harbour as well as from the land; but the harbour was closed by a strong chain, and defended by eight large ships, more than twenty of a smaller size, and several galleys and sloops. In this perplexity, the genius of Mahomet conceived and executed a plan of a bold and marvellous cast, of transporting by land his lighter vessels and military stores from the Bosphorus into the higher part of the harbour. The distance was about ten miles; the ground was uneven, and overspread with thickets. A level way was covered with a broad platform of strong and solid planks, and, to render them more slippery, they were anointed with the fat of sheep and oxen. Eighty light galleys and brigantines of fifty and thirty oars were drawn upon the shore of the Bosphorus, arranged successively on rollers, and transported upon this *railroad* by the power of men and pulleys. Two guides or pilots were stationed at the helm and the prow of each vessel; the sails were unfurled to the winds, and the labor was cheered by

song and acclamation. In the course of a single night, this Turkish fleet painfully climbed the hill, steered over the plain, and was launched from the declivity into the shallow waters of the harbour, far above the molestation of the deeper vessels of the Greeks. The real importance of this operation was magnified by the consternation and confidence which it inspired ; but the notorious, unquestionable fact was displayed before the eyes, and is recorded by the pens, of the two nations.

As soon as Mahomet had occupied the upper harbour with a fleet and army, he constructed, in the narrowest part, a bridge, or rather mole, of fifty cubits in breadth, and one hundred in length ; it was formed of casks and hogsheads joined with rafters linked with iron, and covered with a solid floor. On this floating battery he planted one of his largest cannon, while the galleys, with troops and scaling-ladders, approached the most accessible side, which had formerly been stormed by the Latin conquerors. The Christians have been accused of indolence for not destroying these unfinished works, but their fire was controlled and silenced by the superior fire of the enemy ; nor were they wanting in a nocturnal attempt to burn the vessels, as well as the bridge of the sultan. His vigilance prevented their approach ; their foremost galleys were sunk or taken ; forty youths, the bravest of Italy and Greece, were inhumanly massacred at his command ; nor could the emperor's grief be assuaged by the just though cruel retaliation of exposing from the walls the heads of two hundred and sixty Mussulman captives. After a siege of forty days, the fate of Constantinople could no longer be averted.

In the great and general attack, the military judgment and astrological knowledge of Mahomet advised him to wait till the morning, the memorable twenty-ninth of May, in the fourteen hundred and fifty-third year of the Christian era. The preceding night had been actively employed ; the troops, the cannon, and the fascines were advanced to the edge of the ditch, which, in many parts, presented a smooth and level passage to the breach, and his fourscore galleys almost touched, with their prows and their scaling-ladders, the less defensible walls of the harbour. Under pain of death, silence was enjoined, but the physical laws of motion and sound are not obedient to discipline or fear. Each individual might suppress his voice, and measure his footsteps, but the march and labor of thousands must inevitably produce a strange confusion of dissonant clamors, which reached the ears of the watchmen on the towers. At daybreak, without the customary signal of the morning gun, the Turks assaulted the city by sea and land ; and the similitude of a twined or twisted thread has been applied to the closeness and continuity of their line of attack. The foremost ranks consisted of the refuse of the host, a voluntary crowd, who fought without order or command ; of the feebleness of age or childhood, of peasants and vagrants, and of all who had joined the camp in the blind hope of plunder and martyrdom. The common impulse drove them onwards to the wall ; the most audacious to climb were instantly precipitated ; and not a dart or bullet of the Christians was idly wasted on the accumulating throng. But their strength and ammunition were exhausted in this laborious defence ; the ditch was filled

with the bodies of the slain ; they supported the steps of their companions, and of this devoted vanguard the death was more serviceable than the life. Under their respective bashaws and sanjaks, the troops of Anatolia and Rumania were successively led to the charge ; their progress was various and doubtful, but, after a conflict of two hours, the Greeks still maintained and improved their advantage ; and the voice of the emperor was heard encouraging his soldiers to achieve, by a last effort, the deliverance of their country. At that fatal moment, the janizaries arose, fresh, vigorous, and invincible. The sultan himself, on horseback, with an iron mace in his hand, was the spectator and judge of their valor ; he was surrounded by ten thousand of his domestic troops, whom he reserved for the decisive occasion ; and the tide of battle was directed and impelled by his voice and eye. His numerous ministers of justice were posted behind the line, to urge, to restrain, and to punish ; and if danger was in the front, shame and inevitable death were in the rear of the fugitives. The cries of fear and of pain were drowned in the martial music of drums, trumpets, and atabals ; and experience has proved that the mechanical operation of sounds, by quickening the circulation of the blood and spirits, will act on the human machine more forcibly than the eloquence of reason and honor. From the lines, the galleys, and the bridge, the Ottoman artillery thundered on all sides ; and the camp and city, the Greeks and Turks, were involved in a cloud of smoke, which could only be dispelled by the final deliverance or destruction of the empire.

The immediate loss of Constantinople may be ascribed to the bullet or arrow which pierced the gauntlet of John Giustiniani. The sight of his blood, and the exquisite pain, appalled the courage of the chief, whose arms and counsels were the firmest rampart of the city. As he withdrew from his station in quest of a surgeon, his flight was perceived and stopped by the indefatigable emperor. "Your wound," exclaimed Palæologus, "is slight; the danger is pressing; your presence is necessary; and whither will you retire?" "I will retire," said the trembling Genoese, "by the same road which God has opened to the Turks"; and with these words he hastily passed through one of the breaches of the inner wall. By this pusillanimous act he stained the honors of a military life; and the few days which he survived in Galata, or the isle of Chios, were embittered by his own and the public reproach. His example was imitated by the greater part of the Latin auxiliaries; and the defence began to slacken, when the attack was pressed with redoubled vigor. The number of the Ottomans was fifty, perhaps a hundred, times superior to that of the Christians; the double walls were reduced by the cannon to a heap of ruins; in a circuit of several miles, some place must be found more easy of access, or more feebly guarded; and, if the besiegers could penetrate at a single point, the whole city was irrecoverably lost. The first who deserved the Sultan's reward, was Hassan, the janizary, of gigantic stature and strength. With his scimitar in one hand, and his buckler in the other, he ascended the outer fortification. Of the thirty janizaries who were emulous of his valor, eighteen per-

ished in the bold adventure. Hassan and his twelve companions had reached the summit ; the giant was precipitated from the rampart ; he rose on one knee, and was again overwhelmed by a shower of darts and stones. But his success had proved that the achievement was possible ; the walls and towers were instantly covered with a swarm of Turks ; and the Greeks, now driven from their vantage ground, were overwhelmed by increasing multitudes. Amidst these multitudes, the emperor, who accomplished all the duties of a general and a soldier, was long seen, and finally lost. The nobles, who fought round his person, sustained till their last breath the honorable names of Palæologus and Cantacuzene. His mournful exclamation was heard, "Cannot there be found a Christian to cut off my head ?" and his last fear was that of falling alive into the hands of the infidels. In prudent despair, Constantine cast away the purple ; amidst the tumult, he fell by an unknown hand, and his body was buried under a mountain of the slain. After his death, resistance and order were no more ; the Greeks fled towards the city, and many were pressed and stifled in the narrow pass of the gate of St. Romanus. The victorious Turks rushed through the breaches of the inner wall, and, as they advanced into the streets, they were soon joined by their brethren, who had forced the gate Phenar, on the side of the harbour. It was thus, after a siege of fifty-three days, that Constantinople, which had defied the power of Chosroes, the Chagan, and the Caliphs, was irretrievably subdued by the arms of Mahomet the Second. Her empire only had been subverted by the Latins ; her religion was trampled in the dust by the Moslem conquerors.

The tidings of misfortune fly with a rapid wing, yet such was the extent of Constantinople, that the more distant quarters might prolong some moments the happy ignorance of their ruin. On receiving assurance of the public calamity, the houses and convents were instantly deserted, and the trembling inhabitants flocked together in the streets like a herd of timid animals; as if accumulated weakness could be productive of strength, or in the vain hope, that, amid the crowd, each individual might be safe and invisible. From every part of the capital, they thronged into the church of St. Sophia; in the space of an hour, the sanctuary, the choir, the nave, the upper and lower galleries, were filled with the multitude of fathers and husbands, of women and children, of priests, monks, and religious virgins. The doors were barred on the inside, and they sought protection from the sacred dome. Their confidence was founded on the prophecy of an enthusiast or impostor, that one day the Turks would enter Constantinople, and pursue the Romans as far as the column of Constantine, in the square before St. Sophia, but that this would be the term of their calamities; that an angel would descend from heaven with a sword in his hand, and would deliver the empire with that celestial weapon to a poor man seated at the foot of the column. "Take this sword," he would say, "and avenge the people of the Lord!" at these words the Turks would instantly fly.

While they expected the descent of the tardy angel, the doors were broken with axes, and, as the Turks encountered no resistance, their bloodless hands were employed in selecting and securing the multitude of

their prisoners. Youth, beauty, and the appearance of wealth, attracted their choice ; and the right of property was decided among themselves by a prior seizure, by personal strength, and by the authority of command. In the space of an hour, the male captives were bound with cords, the females with their veils and girdles. The senators were linked with their slaves ; the prelates with the porters of the church ; and young men of a plebeian class with noble maids whose faces had been invisible to the sun and their nearest kindred. Of these unfortunate Greeks, of these domestic animals, whole strings were rudely driven through the streets ; and, as the conquerors were eager to return for more prey, their trembling pace was quickened with menaces and blows. At the same hour, a similar rapine was exercised in all the churches and monasteries, in all the palaces and habitations of the capital ; nor could any place, however sacred or sequestered, protect the persons or the property of the Greeks. Above sixty thousand of this devoted people were transported from the city to the camp and fleet, exchanged or sold according to the caprice or interest of their masters, and dispersed in remote servitude, through the provinces of the Ottoman empire.

From the first hour of the memorable twenty-ninth of May, disorder and rapine prevailed in Constantinople, till the eighth hour of the same day, when the sultan himself passed in triumph through the gate of St. Romanus. He was attended by his viziers, bashaws, and guards, each of whom (says a Byzantine historian) was robust as Hercules, dexterous as Apollo, and

equal in battle to any ten of the ordinary race of mortals. The conqueror gazed with satisfaction and wonder on the strange though splendid appearance of the domes and palaces, so dissimilar to the style of Oriental architecture. In the hippodrome or *atmeidan*, his eye was attracted by the famous twisted column of the three serpents; and, as a trial of his strength, he shattered with his iron mace, or battle-axe, the under jaw of one of these monsters, which, in the eyes of the Turks, were the idols or talismans of the city. At the principal door of St. Sophia, he alighted from his horse and entered the dome; and, such was his jealous regard for that monument of his glory, that, on observing a zealous Mussulman in the act of breaking the marble pavement, he admonished him, with his scimitar, that, if the spoil and captives were granted to the soldiers, the public and private buildings had been reserved for the prince. By his command, the metropolitan church of the East was transformed into a mosque; the rich and portable instruments of superstition had been removed; the crosses were thrown down; and the walls, which were covered with images and mosaics, were washed and purified, and restored to a state of naked simplicity. On the same day, or on the ensuing Friday, the *muezzin* or crier ascended the most lofty turret and proclaimed the *ezan*, or public invitation, in the name of God and his Prophet; the *imam* preached, and Mahomet the Second performed the *namaz* of prayer and thanksgiving on the great altar where the Christian mysteries had so lately been celebrated before the last of the Cæsars. From St. Sophia, he proceeded to the august but desolate man-

sion of a hundred successors of the great Constantine, but which, in a few hours, had been stripped of the pomp of royalty. A melancholy reflection on the vicissitudes of human greatness forced itself on his mind, and he repeated an elegant distich of Persian poetry : "The spider has wove his web in the imperial palace ; and the owl hath sung her watch-song on the towers of Afrasiab."

Sanguinary as Mahomet was, the manner in which he treated the vanquished did him honor. He left the Greeks in possession of several churches, restrained the fury of the soldiery, gave the emperor a magnificent funeral, and rendered Constantinople flourishing. The capture of the city filled Europe with alarm. Yet no serious attempt was made for the expulsion of the Turks. Mahomet subjugated Trebizond, where the name of a Greek empire still subsisted, carried his arms as far as Trieste, and threatened Venice. His lieutenants took Otranto, and penetrated into Calabria. Universal consternation prevailed in Europe, when his career of victory was cut short by a sudden death. He died in 1481, at an age when he was yet capable of executing the greatest enterprises.

END.



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